

INTER Project

# **“Culture Is Our Focus, Diversity Is Our Normality”**

## **INTER Guide to Implement Intercultural Education**

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We owe another debt to Camilla Torna in Florence (IT) who did the artwork and layout.

We hope this Guide will encourage many of you to upgrade, deepen and extend the value of intercultural education and resulting learning to improve integration and make Europe a better place in the future!

Bernd Baumgartl  
on behalf of the INTER project members  
[www.navreme.net](http://www.navreme.net)  
Vienna – March 2006

# The INTER Project

**INTER** was a Comenius Project awarded in 2002, and finalised in 2005.

The INTER project aimed at improving quality of education and contribute to innovation in schools by supporting them in the implementation of an intercultural approach, fostering reflection on and providing a practical tool for initial and in-service training of teachers. The project focused on developing, using, and validating a practical guide which will facilitate analysis, implementation and improvement of intercultural education in schools.

The Guide is available on different formats to be used in face to face and virtual learning environments:

- Paper edition
- CD-Rom.
- Web CT version (only in English).
- Electronic version on Web Site.

The INTER Project has achieved the following objectives:

- 1) To map out cultural diversity in schools in European school settings, to assess educational practices and policies in relation to addressing diversity, to exemplify the intercultural approach in education,
- 2) To prepare the initial version of the INTER Guide (i.e. this publication), the DVD Kaleidoschool, a directory of resources, and a glossary; and
- 3) To apply the guide as training tool in the participating institutions, adapting it to their characteristics (ODL and face to face) and target groups (initial and in-service teaching students, trainers, mediators, and others interested in intercultural education).

[inter.up.pt/](http://inter.up.pt/) \* [www.uned.es/interproject/](http://www.uned.es/interproject/) \* [www.navreme.net/portfolio/evaluation\\_inter.html](http://www.navreme.net/portfolio/evaluation_inter.html)

## navreme knowledge development

**navreme knowledge development**, partner in the INTER project, is an Expert Platform for Evaluation, Consultancy, Research, and Training in EU-Projects and Central, and South-Eastern Europe, on Public Administration Reform, Education, Communication and Human Resources, head-quartered in Vienna (AT), with network nodes in Prague (CZ) and Skopje (MK). The name navreme means “at the right time in most Slavic languages”.

navreme's experts participate in flexible, on-spot or virtual collaboration in a range of own and commissioned projects across Europe as a whole:

- navreme's transnational research projects in education & training, regional development or peace, xenophobia and racism result in theoretical studies, analyses and policy reports. The network is committed to collaborative, applied and action research.
- navreme's international consulting activities include policy advice to, strategic programming for, scenario development with, and evaluations on behalf of EU institutions, governments and private firms. They imply the valorisation of explicit and tacit knowledge, and aim at capacity and institution building.
- navreme's interactive teaching and training shares findings from theory and practice with learners in learner-centred courses, seminars and workshops. This includes Virtual Learning Environments and e-learning.

[www.navreme.net](http://www.navreme.net)

## Evens Prize for Intercultural Education 2005 Awarded to INTER Project

On 22 October 2005 in Antwerpen (BE), the Evens Award was awarded to a project or organization recognized for making an "outstanding contribution to European social integration in the field of intercultural education, and [having] demonstrated determination and creativity." The award of 25.000 € is conferred every two years. Through a Europe-wide call, the Evens Foundation invites applications from among which a committee of independent experts selects a winner.

**The 2005 jury considered the "INTER" project to be "a very innovative and intercultural project which is capable of being transferred and implemented in schools, providing a practical tool for initial and in-service training of teachers".**

**INTER: A practical Guide to implement Intercultural Education** was coordinated by the Spanish distance university UNED ([www.uned.es](http://www.uned.es)), and its aim is to improve quality of education and contribute to innovation by the implementation of an intercultural approach. The project focused on developing, utilising and validating a practical guide for teacher training (for both initial and in-service teachers and trainers) which facilitates Intercultural Education in European schools. Intercultural Education is understood in a broader sense as active learning to address xenophobia and racism, social and cultural diversity. Issues of ethnicity are only one dimension of the way in which "intercultural" is conceived in a process that enhances inclusive education.

During 2003-2005, the INTER Project has 1) mapped cultural diversity, educational practices and policies in Europe in addressing diversity issues; 2) prepared the initial version of the guide; and 3) tested the guide as a training tool in 14 participating institutions in 8 countries, adapting it to their practices (ODL and face to face) and target groups (initial and in-service teaching students). The guide is now available in different formats to be used in face-to-face and virtual learning environments: Paper edition - CD-ROM - Web CT version (only in English) - Electronic version on Web Site. In addition to curriculum and teaching materials, a DVD "Kaleidoschool" on intercultural experiences of schools across Europe, a document resource base, and a glossary are included. The final version of the INTER Guide is now available in English, Spanish, Czech, Latvian, Norwegian, and Portuguese.

"The Evens Award highlights INTER and intercultural education at the right moment, as the European Union is suffering from an identity crisis," comments navreme's executive Bernd Baumgartl. "Only by managing and valuing diversity can a European identity emerge - in addition to national and other identities."





## introduction to the inter guide

- 
- Objectives of the INTER Guide
  - Statement of our Principles
  - What we think Intercultural Education (IE) is, and it is not
  - Structure of the INTER Guide
  - How to use the INTER Guide

The INTER Guide has been designed as a practical tool to provide the reader with support in analyzing, implementing and improving Intercultural Education in school practices. While writing it we have been focused on teachers in training and teachers in service, but we hope it could be also useful to anyone with a direct or indirect interest in thinking critically about Education as well as to those who are not satisfied with the current state of the art for whatever the reasons and want to change and improve the ways in which we are currently teaching and learning.

What we will provide the reader with are mainly challenges to re-think and re-shape her/his current ideas and practices about education. We will try to place you in a position from which you will be able to:

- Make explicit your implicit ideas with which you are currently teaching and learning
- Critically think about them related to actual practices
- Consider different ways and ideas in order to teach/learn
- Decide if you will change and what you would like to change
- Provide you with information, examples, resources, and materials to help you to change your practices if you decide to do so.

In doing so our main objectives are to CHALLENGE:

- Implicit goals of current Education
- The homogeneity perspective
- The ideas of academic success and academic failure
- The idea that Education should be the transmission of knowledge
- The association of cultural diversity with some social label or categories (immigration, ethnicity, minorities, nationality)
- The idea that Intercultural Education consists only of celebrating diversity
- Compensatory Education as an integration/adaptation strategy
- The idea that Intercultural Education is a tool to give actual recipes to solve specific problems
- The myth that IE only evaluates only students' academic performance

And to PROPOSE INSTEAD:

- A critical rethink of the main ideas and goals of Education
- The perspective of Intercultural Education as a strategy to train the citizens of a multicultural society which provides strategies to see diversity as a common richness
- To understand Education as a way to develop individual capacities and strategies to live in a multicultural society
- To develop a critical attitude towards values, to learn how to solve conflicts, and to live along with differing norms
- To use cultural relativism as a strategy of Intercultural education
- To show the need to include in classrooms antiracist education for everyone including ourselves
- To make curricular adaptations in classrooms bearing in mind the students' points of view, and to promote co-operation and empathy
- To develop communicative skills, group work, cooperation and social mediation
- To be aware of the need to fight structural and individual discrimination and racism: their processes, factors, and consequences
- To promote better and tighter Family/School/Community relationships
- To assess and evaluate the process of teaching/learning, instead of solely the evaluation of students.

### Statement of our Principles

The team who have produced the INTER Guide have a philosophy close connected to *inclusive education for all in schools*. The fact that schools should be for all pupils means that the teacher should look for the needs of the individuals and to use this knowledge to

give an individual education within an inclusive setting, and that all students should have the right to belong in an inclusive school.

We all agreed to share the following principles in a meeting which took place in Madrid, Spain in December 2003:

- **We do believe in Social Justice, Democracy, and in sharing Power**
- **Human beings have more in common with each other than what tells us apart**
- **We do understand and accept diversity and conflict**
- **We also think acknowledging diversity improves creativity in order to find differing solutions to the same problems**
- **We are aware that we all have and use prejudices and stereotypes when we relate to other people**
- **We should know and learn about societies and human groups which are different from our own**
- **We should also adopt a global perspectives that will provide us with a broader understanding of human groups beyond ethnicity and beyond any kind of labels**
- **We should make participation available for everybody**

#### **What we think Intercultural Education is, and it is not**

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“[An] Educational approach based on the respect and appreciation of cultural diversity. It is targeted at each and every member of society as a whole, proposing an integrated model of involvement in the student's education that arranges all the aspects of the educational process in such a way that we achieve equal opportunities / results for all, overcomes racism in its various manifestations and establishes intercultural communication and competence”

**(Aguado, 1995)**

The idea is to establish an approach from which we can deal with the questions relating to the management of diversity in Education on the understanding that this diversity manifests itself in forms that go beyond the established limits of cultural and ethnic or nationalistic groups. From this approach we can deal with all other significant variables in both a formal educational context and in other informal and less structured contexts.

Equality of opportunities and resources implies that the abilities, talents and experiences of students should be a valid starting point for subsequent schooling, and demands the existence of justice and the genuine possibility of equality in academic results for all students. It involves a balance between the formal and informal, the individual and the collective, the process and the product, diversity and unity; it demands coordination be-

tween the forces of change, positive self-esteem, self-confidence and self-assertion. It also demands a certain clarity of vision that will allow us to tackle the many dilemmas and paradoxes. The implementation of measures that promote equal opportunities puts to the test our tolerance capacity and our ability to appreciate diversity as a valuable force and not as a weakness that must be overcome. It is fundamental that schools should implement measures that promote equal opportunities, but, no less important, that they are implemented in the working, family and social environments.

This proposal sets ambitious targets in the sense that it entails the adoption of a perspective that modulates all educational decisions, promoting at the same time different actions in terms of the cultural interactions and other variables relevant to education. Its effectiveness would depend to a large extent on the requirements of the individual and the community of the specific context in which it is implemented and also on the combination of other social and structural measures that go beyond the educational environment. If these conditions are not met, all these so called intercultural initiatives could be used as a subterfuge for inequality, as an alibi for avoiding the implementation of initiatives that are genuinely respectful of cultural diversity or as a mere showcase for the more "tourist" and superficial vision of cultural manifestations.

So we think *Intercultural Education is not*:

- Isolated celebrations: the often named "Intercultural week", "Gastronomic Day", "Peace Day", and so on
- Just learning about the characteristics of certain groups as "others", so as to "get to know them better"
- Having recipes to solve conflicts, or to address so called differently labelled groups.
- Educational programmes aimed at specific groups, such as compensatory classes and the like
- Mixing students from different backgrounds without promoting positive relationships or other wider aims
- Avoiding conflicts! Conflicts are part of our everyday life, the key is to manage them properly, and to be aware of our biases, positively and actively learning to fight discrimination and prejudices

### Structure of the INTER Guide

We have divided the INTER Guide into eight modules, each one addressing Intercultural Education and how to implement it from a different angle, followed by a Glossary of terms. We have chosen the following ideas as perspectives to help you in understanding and implementing Intercultural Education, should you decide to do so:

**Module 1: Compulsory Education** - Challenges the reader into rethinking the significance of compulsory education today, critically analyzing the aims and function of compulsory schooling in our societies, and introducing the Intercultural approach as a proposal for transformation of schools.

**Module 2: Diversity versus Homogeneity in Schools** - We define here the ideas of *homogeneity* and *diversity*, helping the reader to identify both in her/his school environments. To show the benefits and difficulties we see in switching from a mostly homogeneous perspective (which is currently operating in most classrooms) to a diversity perspective in the process of learning which acknowledges and works out of individual variation.

**Module 3: School, Home, Community** - Reflects on the importance of good relationships and collaboration among families, schools and other community agents, considering different alternatives of collaboration which may occur and to understand them as a continuum. We will also show some examples of projects and practices which promote this kind of participation.

**Module 4: Theoretical Assumptions** - Focuses on identifying the implicit/explicit theories of teachers, showing theories underlying the Intercultural approach (about teaching/learning/ communication) and reflecting upon the practical implications of former analysis.

**Module 5: Educational Policies** - Analyzes educational policies trying to go beyond the plain understanding of laws, norms and regulations to identify and recognize the ideological interests underlying models and ideas which give reason and drive all legislation.

**Module 6: Evaluation, Student Assessment and Quality Assurance** - Encourages reflection on what evaluation is and what we think it should be. It goes beyond the testing of students' academic performances and concentrates attention on the teaching and learning process.

**Module 7: School Structure and Organization** - Tries to make explicit our mental images about schools, to reflect about the main dimensions in school organization, and to elaborate on the practical implications in order to build an Intercultural school.

**Module 8: Teaching and Learning Strategies** - Has the aims of: studying learners and teacher's roles in depth; to contribute to the improvement of competences that teachers have to attain; to help teachers be aware of and practice different strategies; to make known different experiences which teachers could apply.

**Glossary** - We have included at the end of the INTER Guide a Glossary which gathers what we think are the most important terms regarding Intercultural Education. Sometimes we have provided only one definition when we all think it is clear enough and we all agree on it. However, we have included different definitions when our agreement was not

unanimous. We hope that by including different definitions with regard to the same ideas we are presenting a richer perspective and also an example of inclusive diversity!

Besides these eight Modules and the Glossary which constitute the text of the Guide itself, two other resources complete our vision of the INTER Guide:

*A DVD: Kaleidoschool – an intercultural approach.* During the production of this video, we have approached different people and different schools. Fathers, mothers, children, teachers, head teachers, have shared with us their ideas about education, told us what they expected from it, what they did with regard to it, and described their own experiences in school.

We are aware that the selection of contents has been strongly influenced by our own way of thinking and our vision of what school should be like. We hope reality has not been distorted too much, and that the different people portrayed will easily recognise themselves, as well as their opinions.

This video is a perfect excuse to reflect on and re-visit a series of clichés and pre-conceived ideas underlying much of what is being done in schools, including routines that remain unchanged, and to think about alternative strategies that could be used. Re-thinking our vision of schools, and the way we interpret what happens within them, can be a good starting point to improve schooling practices.

The DVD is divided into five different chapters directly related to the modules:

*-Diversity in schools:* Differences are usually perceived as deficits, as deviations from the norm, and the source of problem situations. Contrary to this common belief, we can find people who regard individual diversity as valuable and enriching, and who believe that learning is possible for everyone. Their opinions and experiences are gathered here

*-Theoretical Assumptions:* The school we want is strongly influenced by our vision of society. Bearing in mind the society we want, schools can become a powerful instrument, a means to achieve that society. The foundations for social transformation can be laid in schools

*-School, Home Community:* Promoting communication strategies between both parts is of utmost importance, in order to understand each other, as well as being flexible with regard to different points of view. The school must be open and welcoming to parents, otherwise they will feel alienated and uncomfortable

*-Learning communities:* Learning Communities are aimed at promoting the social and cultural transformation of a school centre and its surroundings. They entail a new type of organization where educators, students, parents, and other community agents work jointly to improve the school and meet the community's educational needs

*-Structure-Organization:* The structure and organization of a school, namely the distribution of time, the organisation of spaces, the grouping criteria, or the links established, clearly influence the type of relations and practices that take place. We need to consider the organization of a school centre in a flexible way, choosing those alternatives that will best suit the schools and the needs of its members.

A **DIRECTORY OF RESOURCES** which gathers and structures the resources we have found and think are valuable for teaching and learning from an Intercultural perspective (including essays, articles, fiction and non fiction works, movies, songs, webpages) in paper as well as in electronic format, audiovisuals, etc. to be used in classrooms. The resources are briefly analyzed and organized into descriptors identified with the modules of the Guide, and compiled in a CD Rom which includes a search tool (available also at the webpage of the project).

### How to Use of the INTER Guide

We have written the INTER Guide trying to combine theory and practice as a platform for the learner to reflect on the process of learning which is divided among the eight modules and addressing different aspects of the process of teaching and learning. It is not necessary that you follow this very same order, we have chosen it as a way to put in order our own ideas. We will elaborate on this on the last paragraph.

When using the INTER Guide, some steps are recommended:

- to read carefully the introduction
- to take an overall look at the whole document.
- to identify the key concepts to discuss according with the audience (their previous knowledge and expectations).
- to use the selected modules in a flexible way.

Each module has a similar structure:

- **to start thinking**
- **information**
- **activities**
- **proposals for collaboration**
- **planning and adapting the curriculum**
- **specific resources and additional links**
- **reflective questions**
- **references**

Each module of the INTER Guide starts with a section titled **TO START THINKING** to provoke thinking in an inspirational way about the main ideas of the module. This section contains a text about a personal experience, an event, a new idea, a quotation, etc. This is designed to provoke reflection, to stimulate the mind and review our main assumptions about the different topics revealed in the modules. We encourage you, the reader, to add to and improve the text by including your own meaningful critical incidents and experiences.

The **INFORMATION** paragraph is designed to present relevant information about the main ideas disclosed in the module. It develops the contents and data necessary to understand and make useful the concepts and activities developed in the module. We have

also included some references (bibliographical, websites) and questions to reflect on the key ideas and concepts managed in each module.

**ACTIVITIES** and **PROPOSALS FOR COLLABORATION**, which content activities to encourage collaboration with others (students, teachers, other people out of your own teaching context). These activities encourage you to look for further information, to interview, to use the virtual platform, to search for new data, to discuss about the main ideas and concepts managed in the module. The activities have been chosen in order to meet the needs of different audiences (in-service teachers or initial teacher training students) and learning environments (face to face, virtual platform).

One of our major concerns is to fight against the extended idea that intercultural education is something extra or complementary to the curriculum. It is for that reason we propose in **PLANNING AND ADAPTING THE CURRICULUM** activities designed to create the opportunity for you to reflect about the decisions we make every day at school and offer ideas to introduce an intercultural approach in the mainstream curriculum. The main objective is to connect the concepts and the proposals about intercultural education with the actual activities developed at school.

**SPECIFIC RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL LINKS** suggests resources to obtain further information about the topic explained in each module. There are resources to read (books, articles, websites, etc.); to watch and hear (video, films, pictures, music, etc); to search (data base, websites). We propose to select the resources which are the most appropriate to the readers needs and the specific context you are using the Guide in (University course, summer school course, virtual learning, conference, workshop, etc).

Each module ends with **REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS AND EVALUATION** which is an epigraph designed to focus on the main ideas put forward in the earlier sections. We make explicit the key questions we should be able to answer once the module have been developed. These questions are closely connected with the objectives proposed at the beginning of the module as well as with the video contents. The student evaluation would require you to accomplish some of the activities proposed in each part of the module and to answer some of the reflective questions proposed in each module of the Guide. More concrete evaluation requirements will be established according to the specific teaching/learning conditions.

We finally provide the reader with the complete **REFERENCES** of the works quoted or referred to in each module.

We have written the INTER Guide to be a useful tool in implementing Intercultural Education but flexible enough to be used in different contexts regarding audiences, time schedules, objectives, etc. But for the Guide to reach its goals you should read it in advance and adapt it to then your own circumstances and interests. In order to use it effectively, you will have to think in your own audience, their interest and yours, and also



about time and space constraints. It is not necessary that you do the whole Guide from beginning to end, you can pick and work with the ideas you think more suitable for your group and choose activities in accordance to it. We have worked with it in different ways and it have been proved useful for distance courses as well as for face-to-face classes, in one-hour introductions or as part as compulsory year-round courses, in seminars or in close-to-a-hundred-student classrooms. We have had very good experiences in all those different contexts but we have noticed that it has been always more time consuming that what we thought in advance. So our advice is that you make up a plan to implementing it and reserve extra time for each part. You don't have to follow our order either, some people have find more useful to start with module 2<sup>nd</sup> or module 8<sup>th</sup> followed by module 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>, it is better if you choose your own itinerary.

### Experiences from using the INTER Guide: Dilemmas and Solutions

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Some dilemmas have been arising during the INTER Guide implementation experience. Let's think about them and also about the solutions we propose:

\* Frequently we have been requested to use the INTER Guide in Seminars or brief sessions, we mean, in a very punctual and limited (in time) way. Usually we have applied the Guide with groups of teachers or counsellors, or...without receiving meaningful information about them (interests, previous knowledge about intercultural education, expectations).

*How to select the appropriate modules? How to choose the most relevant activities? What parts of the video would be the most useful?*

We recommend to start the session with several initial questions about which is their previous knowledge about intercultural education, which are their expectations about the session/seminar and which are the issues they are worried about the subject.

\* The information section included in every module is really interesting. It offers relevant ideas about the subject and provokes reflection. But, the guide doesn't propose specific activities focusing the information section.

We recommend to expose or make the students to present a summary of the key concepts and issues developed in the information section of each module.

\* How to combine in a balanced way the individualistic reflections and the cooperative activities? This has been a complain of some of our distance students. Some of them ask for a course without cooperation work. They are ready to read and write, to look for information in Internet...but, they consider inappropriate to ask parents, or to interview someone.

The INTER Guide is about intercultural education. According our basic assumptions, IE implies interchange, communication, and cooperation. We need to provoke interchange and cooperation between people who usually are not in contact (for instance, teachers and families or teachers and social agents, or...).

We recommend to point out how much necessary is to work with others and to avoid the individualistic work as exclusive way to learn about intercultural education.

*\* The Glossary is a very useful tool to clarify the main concepts underlying intercultural education. After implementing the Guide, we realize people use to have a very stereotyped knowledge about the concepts included in the Glossary. We recommend to dedicate specific activities to discuss those concepts. This does not mean to use the Glossary as a dictionary.*

*\* Recipes or general recommendations? This is one of the most common dilemmas offered by our students. Some of them expect to receive specific recipes about how to manage diversity in the classroom or about what is the best way to behave when working with "diverse students". We recommend to point out that recipes are not useful at all. Every single school context is special and need a specific action. We propose the INTER Guide as a tool to challenge our previous ideas about cultural diversity and we hope that every one is a thinker who is ready to do his/her best in order to improve the way he/she manage diversity.*

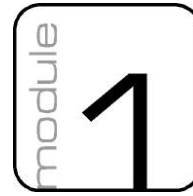
*\* Utopia or reality? "This is too much utopian", "this is not possible in the reality",...these o similar statements have been made by the students in our courses when implementing the INTER Guide. Utopia is the idea of a perfect society which does not exist in practice. To us, intercultural education is utopian but it is possible to put it into practice.*

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**We hope this Guide will help you to reflect on your ideas about Education in any context and improve upon the way you teach and learn with your students if you are currently teaching or you think you will teach in the future!**

**Good luck in the journey you are about to begin!**

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## Compulsory education

In this module we intend to critically think about the aims of compulsory education and its role within the society, especially in terms of diversity. To do so, we will try to:

- **Rethink on the significance of compulsory education today**
- **Critically analyse the aims and functions of compulsory schooling in our societies**
- **Introduce the intercultural approach as a proposal of transformation of school**



## to start thinking

Homeschooling, unschooling, deschooling... The crisis of the school system has provoked some radical responses that promote an active opposition to compulsory schooling and institutional education. Not only its compulsory nature, but also the benefits of school institution itself, have been put under question by some authors, as John Holt and Ivan Illich, promoter of "homeschooling" movement in USA and creator of "deschooling" theory respectively.

"Consequently, after his own years as a classroom teacher, he observed that well-meaning but overworked teachers, who program children to recite right answers and discourage self-directed learning, often retard children's natural curiosity. Holt came to view schools as places that produce obedient, but bland, citizens. He saw the child's daily grind of attending school as preparation for the future adult grind of paying confiscatory taxes and subservience to authority figures. Holt even compared the dreariness of the school day to the experience of having a "full-time painful job." Ultimately, Holt concluded that the most humane way to educate a child was to homeschool him. (...) Holt espoused a philosophy that could be considered a *laissez faire* approach to home-based education or, as he called it, "learning by living". It is a philosophy that Holt's followers have come to describe as *unschooling*."

**Isabel Lyman**, *Homeschooling: Back to the Future?*

<http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-294.html>

"Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what the schools do for them. They school them to confuse process and substance. Once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is, the better are the results; or, escalation leads to success. The pupil is thereby "schooled" to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is "schooled" to accept service in place of value."

**Ivan Illich**, *Deschooling Society*

<http://reactor-core.org/deschooling.html>

**Do you think homeschooling is an actual choice?**

**And, what about deschooling?**

**Can you imagine any other alternative to compulsory formal education?**

Which objectives of education at schools in your opinion, don't fulfil these people expectations and provoke them to search for other alternatives?

---

Here are some examples:

Some parents are not against compulsory education but circumstances do not let their children participate in it. Some different types of schooling have been developed to meet the educational needs of children in particular circumstances, as is the case with children who have long-term illness and cannot attend regular classrooms, either because they are in hospital or because they are unable to leave their homes. Players of different sports at the higher levels live together in special centres where they attend special classes and follow an adapted curriculum. Itinerant professionals and their families, such as circus artists, do have their own itinerant schools. All these examples are official alternatives to regular classrooms.

Here is another example: separate minority schools. A separate school (or class) is based on the ethnic, cultural and religious identities of pupils and also same sex schools). There is a wide range of criteria for separation based on a variety of characteristics of the students attending the school. There are several arguments promoted by their supporters: the protection of ethnicity and cultural membership (ethnic/cultural identity), the educational rights of parents, the countering disadvantage...

"Because certain minority ethnic groups see that mainstream schools are failing their children, one response has been to set up separate schools to serve that particular group. For example, in 1980, a Seventh Day Adventist Christian school to serve Black Caribbean children was set up in North London. More recently, a small number of Muslim schools have been set up. (There are already separate Catholic, Protestant and Jewish schools in the UK - the law allows for any religious denomination to set up their own school.) Some groups are trying to pressure the government to give more money towards the setting up of separate schools."

**I n d e p e n d e n t   r a c e   a n d   r e f u g e e   n e w s   n e t w o r k**  
<http://www.irr.org.uk/2002/november/ak000003.html>

In Latvia, the Roma community and school in the town Tukums involve Roma students' parents in its activities. The idea about learning and the initiative about collaboration came from the Roma community and the municipality. It sounds paradoxically, but the idea was to bring together Roma children in the separate class so they would start to attend the school, to learn, and to receive permanent education. According to the headmaster of the school during three years the children have integrated into society, participated in all school's activities with the rest of pupils. The idea about the separate class was based on the previous experience, that is, in schools, where Roma children were integrated, high rate of non-attendance were present. The parents are very satisfied about the separate class as well as children. The building, which is a part of the school complex, but where the integrated classes are, nevertheless between Roma students is

called as the Roma School. The school and community have an idea about the further education for parents, which could be carried out in the school, since well-educated parents can positively influence their children motivation to learn.

**In your opinion, what are the goals and challenges for compulsory education nowadays?**

**Do you think that compulsory education and the above-mentioned options – homeschooling, separate minority schools... - share the same goals and challenges? Why / why not?**

**Which are the differences between education and schooling? Which do you think are / must be the relations between them?**

**How far is it possible to go in developing a common mandatory educational program for all students?**

**How can we mirror diversity, and develop schools to become generous meeting places for students representing different socio – cultural and individual points of departure?**



## Information

Getting ready for adult life is and has been a duty in any society anywhere and anytime. Today we call it “education” in our society. It is a process through which new members of the group acquire the “right” to be full members of it. How has it done in different places at different times is a particular matter which has different expressions which had to do with what each society considers relevant to be acquired by its new members, to become full members of it, including different abilities, capabilities, information, knowledge, rules, principles, values, believes...

From this perspective we can analyse what our society demands from its new members (its students) by looking at the goals of their educational institutions since they are in charge of transforming the new members in grown-up citizens. By looking at these goals, we can also critically think if these aims are adequate to become a full citizen.

### **What does it mean to be a citizen?**

**Think about the characteristics of a citizen.**

**Do schools educate for citizenship?**

**Think on yourself: does schooling contribute to you being or not being a citizen?**

**In which sense?**

(See definition of “citizenship education” in the Glossary)

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The right to education is considered nowadays as a “natural” and universal right. It seems to be related with two main ideas:

- *Childhood* as a distinctive period of life, the main objective of which is to prepare people for their “future life” by means of education. Thus, childhood is considered as somewhat like a “pre-life” (this consideration may be one of the reasons that sometimes makes schools to seem such artificial places, far from the actual life).
- *Progress* as an ideal of human development directly associated with social welfare and individual happiness.

However, childhood is not a universal and univocal category: thinking of it as a universal one pretends to hide the reality of the different social circumstances and situations of children (Gimeno, 2000). And the modern concept of progress refers to the constant growth of production and consume, time economy, maximization of efficiency and profit and pre-eminence of economical activities, forgetting its effects on the quality of human life and the development of human beings.

Education has become a right and also an obligation, the completion of which must be guaranteed by governments, under the principles of equality and freedom. But it is actually reached only partially and in an unequal manner.

The right and duty of Education is supposed to be carried out by means of compulsory schooling. Compulsory schooling has become not only an institutional practice but also a collective “mental model” that is usually considered as “natural” and universal as the right to education itself.

It is a democratic principle that everyone should have equal rights to education. Through education students are meant to become rational and to acquire the means for critical thinking. Furthermore they are meant to acquire knowledge and to incorporate universal values. Education is meant to further enlightenment, democracy and social justice, as well as societal integration and economic growth. In developed democracies the citizens have both the right and a duty to seek education, which often is organized in the form of compulsory elementary schools open to everyone. The mandatory education supplied through elementary schools is meant in principle to secure the same point of departure in life for all, and to supply a unifying platform across possible divides of class and culture.

**Does compulsory education fulfil this objective? What happens with children who “fail” at school?**

**And, what about drop out students?**

(See “equity” and “equality” in the Glossary).

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However, in front of the aims of education, we find some functions that school uses to comply: classification, selection and indoctrination of individuals, custodial care, keeping the status quo... To what extension are these functions intentional? Are they linked with the compulsory nature of school system? Is there any way to control them? Has school the possibility of becoming a space of transforming society?

The ideal of equal right to education pre-supposes more than the principle of a mandatory education in an elementary school. If the ideal is to become reality, the elementary school must represent a generous and including togetherness, where the ideal of equality includes all kind of diversity: gender, class, culture and the variations in functional capacity. The educational process must override the outlook on life and the language of the majority, to respectfully include the outlook on life and the languages of actual minorities. The students must be able to feel at home with the atmosphere and the codes of conduct in the school. They must be able to experience that their own background and their identity is accepted and respected, and last but not least: they must be able to understand what is being expressed and mediated.

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**To what extent does elementary education mirror the cultural, social and expressional diversity of a given country?**

**To what extent is it possible to speak of a generous and including communality across the boundaries of ethnic identity, religion, sexual preferences and functional diversity?**

Several famous films show real examples of non-respect to minorities. One of them is “Cry freedom”, by Richard Attenborough: you may find details on this film in the INTER Directory of Resources.

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Most democracies are generous and including on the level of plans and intentions, as well as in their basic lawmaking and in their curricular and general educational principles.

But the attention to diversity and inclusion is just one of many ideas lying at the basis of mandatory elementary education. Among other pervasive ideas is the need for attention to what furthers national interests. We know how nations tend to use schools and education as means to build unified societal structures and functions. The origin of school sys-



tem is strongly linked to the origin of the idea of country as a nation. In the mandatory elementary school, organized as a national unitary school, students meet across social and cultural barriers to study common curriculum, while being brought up to cherish national identity and love of own country. In France students are socialized to become French. In Sweden students are brought up to become Swedes, and so on. Unity is stressed rather than diversity. Consensus is sought rather than conflict. But to what extent is unity and consensus being promoted regardless of if such values reflect the social and cultural realities outside the classroom?

In the elementary school, being a meeting place for diversity, one does not only meet others, but also its' own in a new manner: One comes to observe what characterizes ones' own as well as observing ones' own cultural characteristics. One also may encounter negative reactions to what one deems positive and valuable: the dialect one speaks is devalued, personal views are treated as invalid, and ones' own cherished way of behaving is evaluated on a foreign scale of values.

We find important differences between the aims of education (that is supposed to be the same as the aims of schooling) and some of the real functions of school system nowadays: custodial care, selection based in some kind of standard of human excellence, classification, stratification, indoctrination, keeping the status quo...

The compulsory schooling put in relation the education of individuals with the logic of power. Schools and education systems transmit from one generation to another what are considered to be legitimate and socially valuable knowledge, attitudes and competencies (Hutmacher et al., 2001). The institutionalisation of school and education systems implies the definition of:

- an educational authority;
- the culture (curricula) to transmit;
- the methods of transmission and assessment;
- the selection of teachers and learners;
- the organizational arrangements;
- the physical assets (buildings and classrooms).

All of these elements constitute a kind of theory that actually works with the following features:

1. Much of this knowledge is of a normative and prescriptive nature. Action of teachers on students in asymmetric power relationships is driven by norms, values and standards of human excellence; but how can human diversity fit with this previous "ideal" standard of excellence?
2. Some of this knowledge is formalized in goals, rules, curricula, etc., but much is of a tacit nature, operating as self-evident truth reproduced from generation to generation and legitimised through the experience of children within schools, rather than through formal instruction. It constitutes the "hidden curriculum" (see Glossary).

3. The educational processes are embedded in political and/or bureaucratic power structures, where the source of legitimating ultimately resides in the hierarchy.

Equal right to education is an ideal more than a social reality. Ethnicity (see definition in the Glossary) and social background are still relatively important factors influencing a school – career and the attainability of a certain educational level. Even western democracies have not succeeded in supplying a fully democratic recruitment to higher education. There is still a measurable connection between a certain level of education and the actual person's family – background and the education of his or her parents. Even if women have entered the academic institutions in force, educational preferences and later professional careers are still partly subject to gender-biased choices.

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**Compulsory education is a stage in a process aimed at securing equal rights to education for all. But to what extent is it possible to develop schools without social and cultural biases?**

**Is it possible to develop modes of conduct and a culture of educating which does not favour some students to the detriment of others?**

**Is it possible to develop a curriculum fitted to the needs of every student?**

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So, the school system is suffering an extended crisis; from time ago, several voices claim for a radical change and transformation of school. Now it is time to discuss and reformulate its sense, keeping in mind the characteristics of the nowadays society.

Multi / Intercultural education is defined by some authors as an approach for transforming education and schools:

Multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education that holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education. It is grounded in ideals of social justice, education equity, and a dedication to facilitating educational experiences in which all students reach their full potential as learners and as socially aware and active beings, locally, nationally, and globally. Multicultural education acknowledges that schools are essential to laying the foundation for the transformation of society and the elimination of oppression and injustice.

(Paul C. Gorski, <http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/education/multi/define.html>)

Multicultural education is an idea, an educational reform movement, and a process (Banks, 1997). As an idea, multicultural education seeks to create equal educational opportunities for all students, including those from different racial, ethnic, and social-class groups. Multicultural education tries to create equal educational opportunities for all students by changing the total school environment so that it will reflect the diverse cultures and groups within a society and within the nation's classrooms. Multicultural education is a process be-

cause its goals are ideals that teachers and administrators should constantly strive to achieve.

(Multicultural Education: Goals and Dimensions **James A. Banks**  
<http://depts.washington.edu/centerme/view.htm>)

(Intercultural education is an) educational approach based on the respect and appreciation of cultural diversity, targeted at each and every member of society as a whole, proposing an integrated model of involvement in the student's education that arranges all the aspects of the educational process in such a way that we achieve equal opportunities / results for all, overcome racism in its various manifestations and establish intercultural communication and competence.

(Aguado, 1995)

If we talk in terms of compulsory education as education of quality for all, equality of opportunities for all, equity, ... school system as it is now doesn't fulfil these characteristics. Intercultural education has in its basis these ideals, and it proposes an educational reform to reach them for all students, bearing in mind cultural diversity. From the intercultural focus, compulsory education means no possibility of school failure for everyone.

The critics of the school system from the intercultural approach relate to the fact that schooling doesn't achieve educational goals with all the students, and it excludes some diverse groups systematically: curricula does not reflect different perspectives, teaching styles serve some groups but not others, schools serve to maintain the status quo and not to critic it. From this perspective, education and school need a global reform in order to reach the goals of learning for all, equity and quality education for all.



## activities and suggestions

### Activity 1

Analyse and write down the reasons against the compulsiveness given by its disparagers, and look for reasons in favour of it (you may find some useful information in the "Specific Resources and Additional Links" section as well as in the INTER Directory of Resources). Thinking locally and globally, try to answer the following questions:

- In what sense do you think Education must be considered as a right and as a duty?
- Is Compulsory Education the best way to fulfil the right to Education? Which are the main barriers to the extension of this right?

**INTER PROJECT**

- In your opinion, which are the main goals of the school system nowadays? What are its failures?
- In which way do you think Intercultural Education can be a transforming alternative for schools today?
- What kind of changes could you, as a teacher, implement to improve the system from the intercultural approach? What other changes do you think are necessary to reach it? Who would be the responsible person/institution for these improvements?

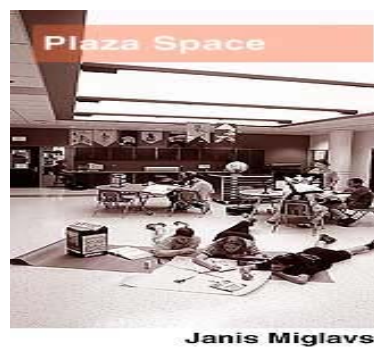
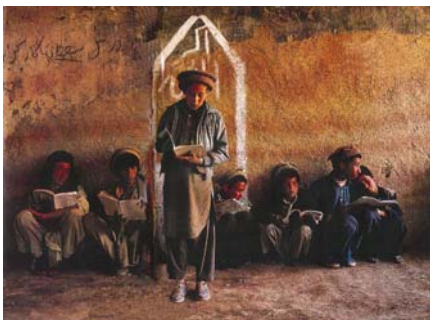
Write down your personal conclusions.

## Activity 2

Look at the following pictures and try to imagine which could be the aims of the different schools reflected on them...

- Do you think they use students' diversity for the enrichment of the educational process? In which way?
- In your opinion, do they fit the principles of Intercultural Education? Why? Why not?





### Activity 3

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Look at the following table containing the official general educational objectives of compulsory education in some European countries.

<i>Spain</i>	<i>Norway</i>	<i>Latvia</i>	<i>Portugal</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>Austria</i>	<i>Czech Republic</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to favour the socialisation of girls and boys.</li> <li>- To provide them with a common education that gives them the opportunity.</li> <li>- To acquire a basic cultural background</li> <li>- To gain a command of oral expression, as well as of reading, writing and arithmetic</li> <li>- To acquire a gradual autonomy in their respective environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To expand the individual's capacity to perceive and to participate, to experience, to emphasise and to excel.</li> <li>- To provide perspective and guidance for the future.</li> <li>- To manage the learners themselves can take part in the further development of inherited practices and in the acquisition of new knowledge.</li> <li>- To provide learners with awareness of the variety and scope of the world of work and bestow the knowledge and skills necessary for active participation in it.</li> <li>- To teach and combine know-how with human insight, to develop a work force that is highly qualified and versatile, and to combine an international outlook with national distinction.</li> <li>- To inspire individuals to realise their potential in ways that serve the common good; to nurture humanity in a society in development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To provide pupils with necessary basic knowledge and skills for social and personal life;</li> <li>- To generate background for further education;</li> <li>- To favour harmonic development and up growth of personality;</li> <li>- To promote responsible attitude towards oneself, family, society, surrounding environment and the state.</li> <li>- To Learn how to study and adopts basic skills of using ICT;</li> <li>- To Gain possibility to get experience of creative activities;</li> <li>- To Accomplish communication and cooperation abilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To ensure overall education for all children and adolescents, guaranteeing them the discovery and development of their interests and skills, ability to reason, retain what is learnt, develop a critical, creative mind,;</li> <li>- To provide pupils with basic knowledge that will allow them to continue their studies or to attend vocational training courses;</li> <li>- To develop a national awareness that at the same time will be universal in outlook and encourage solidarity and international co-operation;</li> <li>- To encourage citizen training and a sense of civic responsibility, forming citizens who will democratically participate in community life;</li> <li>- To guarantee children and adolescents with special educational needs conditions appropriate for their development and to help them make full use of their abilities;</li> <li>- To participate in the educational information and guidance process together with families;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society</li> <li>- To prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.</li> <li>- To give children an excellent start in education so that they have a better foundation for future learning;</li> <li>- To enable all young people to develop and to equip themselves with the skills, knowledge and personal qualities needed for life and work;</li> <li>- To encourage and enable adults to learn, improve their skills and enrich their lives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arousing and nurturing the eagerness to learn, skills, interest and talents;</li> <li>- Strengthening and developing pupils' faith in their own achievement;</li> <li>- Strengthening or building social competence.</li> <li>- Improvement of language skills;</li> <li>- Gradual formation of appropriate attitudes towards learning and working;</li> <li>- Transition from the play-oriented forms of learning in pre-school education to a purposeful, independent and achievement-based learning process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cognitive level - pupils are required to learn knowledge that is the foundation of general culture, prepares conditions for communication and helps them to orientate themselves in incentives occurring out of school;</li> <li>- Skills and competencies level - i.e. ability to employ acquired skills in real-life situations;</li> <li>- Value and attitude level - human moral values, that are part of European traditions, are fundamental, values on which democratic society and legal order depend and values that enable the pupils to form responsible relationship to their own actions</li> </ul>

Select the objectives of at least two countries and assess them from the intercultural approach. Try to answer the following questions:

- Are these objectives formulated from an inclusive perspective?
- Do they refer to students' and families' diversity? If so, how?
- Do they promote any kind of transformation of school/society?
- Are they formulated for all students to reach valuable outcomes? If so, why/why not?
- Are they meaningful and useful? If so, what for and to whom?

Write down your conclusions and highlight the achievements and shortages that you find.

#### Activity 4

School must be a space of inclusion and sharing. But too often it becomes a space of segregation and non-awareness. A place where individual and cultural differences are not accepted nor respected.

Lloyd Colfax, a Makah friend who is a teacher in Washington, told me:

To make the Indian comply with European principles of social behaviour it became necessary to separate him from his own values, which had successful propagation over thousands of years. The main threat was to individualize the thinking of each Indian person, to disengage him from his natural tendencies of pluralism.

The school system was born of the Industrial Revolution. The philosophy appears to be to turn out a product that will fit into the industrial machine of our times. The implication is a strengthening of the idea of pursuing [mainstream] careers.

But there are very few careers on Indian reservations. Attempts to continue education on this theory increase the possibility of conflict. If an Indian child is going to abandon his values as handed him from generation to generation ... he must then be prepared to accept the consequences of his decision. This is extremely hard to do, especially because of the legal aspect by which he is bound. He is still an Indian, with a definable relationship to his tribe.

The very promise of democracy is contrary to tribalism in that it advocates a respect and concern for individualism as a birthright. Tribalistic approaches are more of self-sacrifice, a self-fulfilment with close relationships to family and community. If the promise of an optimum education means that teaching and learning should be individualized ... then schools must take another look at their position. By being Indian, we have different values than non-Indian society, a different philosophy of life, different aspirations in life and the real possibility of different goals.

Presently we understood that the places we called home really did not belong to Sweden.

We were in a way included as a spurious afterthought; a kind of people strangely occupying some deserted boggles in the north, only partly passing as Swedish.

We were different, a little bit underdogs, a little bit uneducated, a little bit spiritually undeveloped.

We had no deer, no groundhogs, and no nightingales.

We did not have a "jetset". We had no roller coasters; we had neither castles nor grand manors.

The only thing we really had was an incredible abundance of mosquitoes, and then we had the Tornedal – Finnish swearing and the communists.

It was growing up in missing. Not in a materialistic sense. We managed. But we missed our identity. We were nothing. Our parents were nothing. Our ancestors had not meant anything in Swedish history.

Our surnames were impossible to spell, not to mention to pronounce, for the few teacher -novices who were brave enough to leave the real Sweden for us."

**(Mikael Niemi: Popular – music from Vittula).**

Here, unfortunately, Roma culture, after five centuries of living together, uh..., continues being the great unknown...It isn't known, it doesn't appear on textbooks that we arrive in 1425, the persecution and the "pragmatica" are not mentioned at all... And more regrettably indeed, Roma community is not mentioned in relation with the Holocaust, and there were five hundred thousand people who died in the crematoriums, and it has been profusely disseminated the Jewish people subject... I think all of this is a falseness, I think we are not true on telling our History, we (Roma people) contributed to the foundation of Spanish nation...

**(Fernández Enguita, 1999)**

Reflect on the opinions and feelings expressed in the former texts. Analyse critically the implicit and explicit circumstances and reasons that act behind these situations. Do you know any other cases similar to these? What happens when people's culture is not reflected or is even denied at school? How can compulsory education provide an answer to this?

#### Activity 5

The INTER video includes some video clips useful to reflect on the main concerns of this module. Look for them and try to analyze what you are going to watch from the perspective of your previous reflections.





## proposals for collaboration

### PROPOSAL 1. Clarifying your ideas about education

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Divide a piece of paper into three sections. In the first one, write down your own ideas about Education: what it is for, or what it should be for. Remember what you think when you decided to make a career of teaching. In the second section, please write down what you think parents think about education: why they send their children to school?, what do they demand from schools? In the third section you should do the same about your students: what do they think Education is for? What do they expect after finishing school?

After these ideas have been written on a piece of paper, you should now contrast them with actual ideas parents and students have about Education. You can arrange an interview with co-operative parents, or raise the subject in the classroom and ask your students or you could give them both a standardized questionnaire to collect opinions on the following questions:

- What is schooling for?
- How do schools help people to develop their lives?
- Why is schooling is important and necessary in our societies?

Compare and analyse the ideas you got from students and parents with those you assume in the first place from them. Look for contradictions and try to explain them.

What did you learn in making the analysis? Do you think some of your previous ideas should be changed? Which ones? Why? What kind of school would you like for you, for your children, ...? How should it be? Summarise them in a brief document and give your conclusions. Develop an alternative document on objectives of schooling with the participation of all members of the school community.

### PROPOSAL 2. Comparing ideas about education with education in practice

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Once you finished previous activity, we want you now to try to compare ideas and practice. Which of the ideas about education are being fulfilled in your own classroom? Are there any educational practices, which are leading your teaching to achieve your ideas about education in general? Which ones? Are there any practices contradicting these ideas? Are there any ideas left out? Why? What could you do to better meet practice and

ideas? Are there any barriers to smoothly combine the practice and the ideas? What can you do about them?

1. Thinking about educational goals in your school: As a third step in the process you should have in mind previous analysis on ideas and practices to compare now with the actual educational goals in your own school centre. If the school has developed a document reflecting its educational goals ("Proyecto de Centro" in Spanish) you should look at it to analyse them in contrast with your previous conclusions. Again you should take notice of where they meet or where they separate from each other, pointing out the reasons, and developing conclusions on their availability.

2. Sharing your findings with other professionals: If you are able to make a poster reflecting your findings in the three former activities, it could be an excellent way to share them with other teachers, to discuss them, and to develop proposals to make changes. If you look for the goals of Intercultural Education, you will get a richer and more focused analysis.

3. Organizing a teachers' workshop: Discuss these ideas (you may also wish to invite parents). Write the conclusions of the workshop to be gathered in a written report in order to be compared, as evaluation at the end of this module, with the goals of Intercultural Education. (This activity must be placed in the teacher's actual classroom to show their specific circumstances - social class, schooling level, etc.).



## planning and adapting curriculum

1. The following general objectives are real examples taken from the institutional project documents of different European schools. Add to them the objectives of one more school from your experience (a school known by you as student, as teacher or professional, as father or mother). Analyse them putting them in relation to the aims of our educational practice. Try to identify the significant and the irrelevant or contradictory from the intercultural perspective. Do you think these schools can become a space of social transformation? Make suggestions to improve and change.

Jurmala Alternative school was founded in 1991 as an experimental national non-private school to develop and test educational principles for further use in the Latvian school system. At present Jurmala Alternative School is attended by children in pre school (3 to 6 years), and elementary school (1 to 9 grades). The school develops its curriculum based on the following principles:

- Education is based on the needs and experiences of the child.
- The teacher is a consultant.
- The school is a microcosm of the larger world.
- Educational resources are varied. Emphasis is placed on understanding the environment from the child to the school, yard, neighbourhood, city, country, world, and universe.
- Skills are the means, not the ends of education.

In addition to providing an education to the children, the Jurmala Alternative school has been mandated to:

- Develop individualized education and other teaching methods.
- Incorporate projects, excursions, and practical activities in the everyday learning process.
- Offer internships for students of education.
- Provide teacher-training seminars.
- Prepare teaching materials.

#### MONTSERRAT SCHOOL CENTER (MADRID)

##### Educational assumptions

- An education for life, promoting attitudes of responsibility, work, supportiveness, critical thinking and an explicit defence of Human Rights.
- Respect to the features of individuals, who must be assessed because of his/her effort and not for the results.
- Everybody's rights are the limits to each one freedom.
- Supportiveness, mutual respect and cooperative work are the attitudes that lead to a good cohabitation and the rejecting of all kind of discrimination.
- The development of all the student's abilities to promote an integral education.

##### General objectives 2002-2003

1. To maintain the assumptions of respect, responsibility and participation.
2. To promote the link between the tutorial work and seminars.
3. To empower the participation of students in different activities and commissions inside the centre in order to reach an integral education.
4. To increase the existence and rigour of contents.
5. To develop strategies to study each subject, making clear the evaluation criteria and the quarter programme.

2. "What is important about what pupils learn in school is not primarily the 'overt' curriculum of subjects like French and Biology, but values and beliefs such as conformity, knowing one's place, waiting one's turn, competitiveness, individual worth and deference to authority. The hidden curriculum teaches pupils 'the way life is' and that education is something that is done to them rather than something, which they do. The prevailing values of society are 'picked-up' by pupils." (Whitty & Young 1976)

Read the following stories. All of them tell us something about what we call "hidden curriculum" and its influence on students. The implicit values, expectations, beliefs, feelings, prejudices that lay behind the teacher's behaviour. Make explicit the messages you can find in them. Analyse the possible reasons and implications for the students and teachers.

In my survey, I asked students what teachers did or said to show that they believed students were smart. Students wrote that teachers smiled, talked to them, gave them a pat on the back, looked proud of them, or "pulled me to the side and told me that I was doing good". Students gave the following reasons for thinking that what a teacher thinks or believes about them affects how they feel about themselves:

"Yes, because if he or she tells me I'm smart, I will feel happy and start doing my work"

"If a teacher believes in you, it gives the student more confidence about himself or herself".

"I think if a teacher does not believe in me, I will never amount to anything".

...Works, beliefs, actions: Sometimes teachers do not realize the tremendous impact these can have...teachers words and beliefs can also shape futures.

The teacher of the third grade, while going to the classroom, explains to me that all children in "her group" are very participative. Afterwards, directly observing them, I have the opportunity to "confirm" her assertion: if anybody during the lesson has not intervened to make questions or contribute in some way, the teacher ask her/him personally to "participate" by making them a direct question: who can get rid of speaking...?

(Extract from a field notebook of a member of the INTER team)

(See "participation" in the Glossary)

Cristina (the teacher) sometimes walks around the table of Saida and, although seeing the girl with her hand up, doesn't pay any attention to her. The girl has been with her hand up for several minutes and finally decides to bring it down and only look at Cristina. Meanwhile, she continues talking to the rest of the children about how to carry on the work. The teacher sits in front of the group and Saida bring up her hand again. Cristina doesn't pay her any attention.

(Classroom observation, from **Bartolomé**, 1997, p. 249)

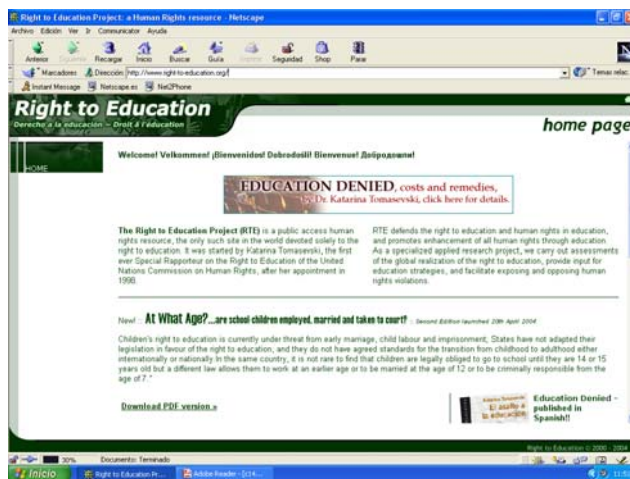
Big Arnie, formerly a kindergarten teacher, had been hired as the school's new compensatory teacher responsible for setting up a classroom to accommodate groups of students who found it difficult to function in regular classrooms settings. Arnie offered miniature hockey, table tennis, darts, macrame, lessons on how to use a yo-yo, and colouring Star Wars stencil. He also served as a sounding board for the kids' problems.

Teachers could choose up to five students from a class, and send them over to Arnie for half an hour at a time. Some teachers use the opportunity to go to Arnie's room as a bribe, so kids would finish their work. Other teachers admitted sending kids to Arnie that they didn't like, just to get them out of the room.

(McLaren, 1998, p. 84)



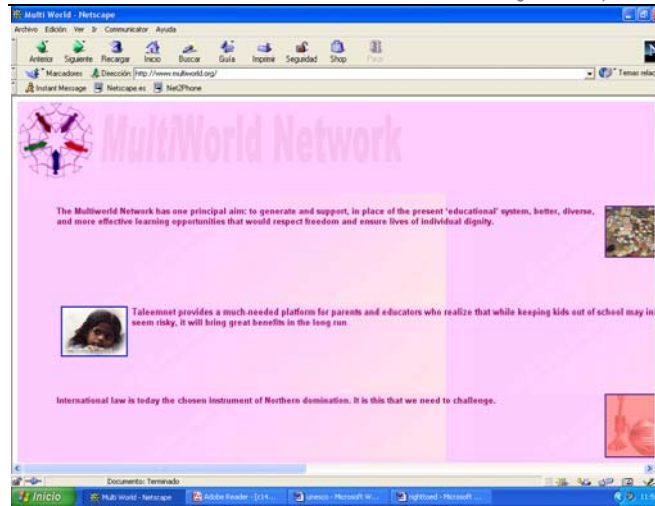
## specific resources and additional links



<http://www.right-to-education.org>

The Right to Education Project (RTE) is a public access human rights resource, the only such site in the world devoted solely to the right to education. It was started by Katarina Tomasevski, the first ever Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

**INTER PROJECT**



<http://www.multiworld.org>

The Multiworld Network has one principal aim: to generate and support, in place of the present 'educational' system, better, diverse, and more effective learning opportunities that would respect freedom and ensure lives of individual dignity.

**Lyman, Isabel.** *Homeschooling: Back to the Future?* <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-294.html>.

**Illich, Ivan.** *Deschooling Society.* <http://reactor-core.org/deschooling.html>.

**Multicultural Education: Goals and Dimensions James A. Banks**  
<http://depts.washington.edu/centerme/view.htm>

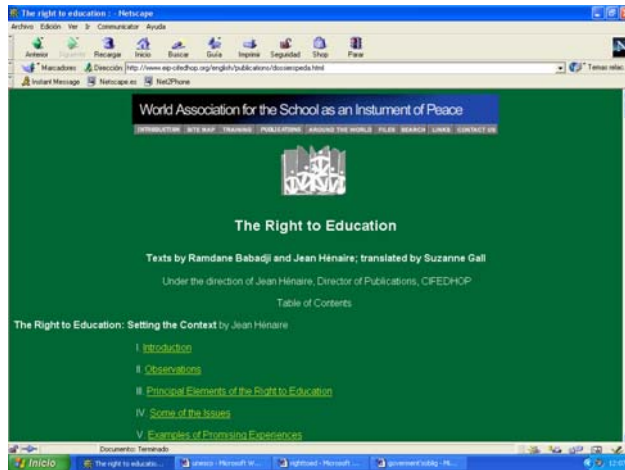
**Gorski, Paul C.:** <http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/education/multi/define.html>



<http://portal.unesco.org/education> UNESCO &  
<http://www.ibe.unesco.org>

International Bureau of Education. Description of activities at international, regional and local level. One of the functions of the IBE as an observatory of educational structures, contents and methods is to maintain an international educational information centre.

**INTER PROJECT**



<http://www.eip-cifedhop.org/english/index-en.html>

The World Association for the School as an instrument of peace (EIP) carries out its activities in the area of human rights and peace education. Convinced of the major role schools can play, EIP works to heighten an awareness of this within educational circles, governmental authorities and public opinion. Its work aims at developing the attitudes, skills and knowledge with respect to the enhancement of human rights, fundamental freedoms and non-violent conflict resolution.



## reflective questions and evaluation

These questions arise from one of the goals of this module, namely “to critically analyse compulsory Education, its theoretical principles and its actual social role.”

### Question 1

If you think the goals of compulsory education are adequate and important, can we fully include them in our educational scheme? Can we use them as a guide for our teaching practice?

### Question 2

Analyse the actual role of compulsory education. Here we ask you to think about what students actually get by following compulsory Education. You have to focus on the differences between what they should get and what they actually get.



## references

**Gimeno Sacristán, José** (2000). *La educación obligatoria: su sentido educativo y social (=Compulsory Education: Its educational and social sense)*. Madrid: Morata.

**Hutmacher, Walo; Cochrane, Douglas and Bottani, Norberto** (eds.) (2001). *In pursuit of equity in education. Using international indicators to compare equity policies*. Dordrecht / Boston / London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.





## homogeneity vs. diversity in schools



to start thinking

This Guide has been written by a team of authors.

Do you think we are a homogeneous or a diverse group?

To help you decide, take some time to read the following autobiographical pieces of some members, where they introduce themselves to you.

José:

A colleague has asked us to write something (I have to confess I didn't know what she wanted). I think she was asking for a kind of synthesis about how I met this group (the group who is writing this Guide). My first thought was, "Who would be interested in that?" (I must confess that I was not interested, and I presume that neither would most of you!).

Thinking about this module, homogeneity and diversity, trying to figure out what it will be useful for, and within the framework of such an ambiguous request I am still not sure what it is about. The only thing I can do is to tell you a little about my life, trying to show some of my feelings, revealing a bit of homogeneity and perhaps identity and diversity that we all have to a certain degree. So here goes...

I arrived in Madrid almost six years ago (I was born in a little city in the province of Cadiz) and I suppose that, not because of Madrid but of the working context I encountered, I started feeling completely different, similar to the people from the place I came from. Here everybody rushed from one place to another. I found it was impossible to meet people outside their workplace, and it seemed to me that in order to do serious things we all had to look serious.

I like to enjoy what I do, as I suppose is the case for everyone else but perhaps even more. Also, I like to laugh while doing whatever I do, I like to be flexible enough (I'm more of a global thinker) to make a joke of and see the funny side of everything. It requires me to pay attention to anything, which could possibly have a double meaning, and I have always been ready for the most unbelievable meaning! Here this seems impossible.

Sometimes when I made a joke, many people misunderstood me. The feeling I got looking at their serious faces after my telling a genial joke was so disappointing and "down to

earth” for me that it was very hard to bear. I could only resign myself to this extremely serious and (for me) so difficult to understand sense of humour. I still have that feeling. My lifeguards were people from down there whose perspectives and world visions were so similar to mine. With them it was easier to laugh.

The only way I figured that I could safeguard my own identity, which I suppose exists and is real, was to stand firm, and to keep being myself. In front of all these people who seemed not to accept my personality or the way I speak (many times I felt judged and could recognize that association between difference and deficiency, which is so common) the only thing left for me was to stand out for who I was, being myself in an exaggerated way, and highlighting those features which they did not like, making almost a caricature of myself. I liked noticing how people squirmed in their seats at my insolent behaviour, it was something subversive and at the same time it distinguished me.

Little by little, as years pass by, I broaden the range of my behaviour and thinking, it's as if you have more records, and while I still maintain my style, which I do not want to lose, I accommodate others'. Slowly I became aware of, and enjoyed, the good things there are here, although deep inside I know it is impossible to be as I used to be there. Little by little I feel a sense of belonging here.

I had better stop here since this is becoming longer than a synthesis. In the end I found out I was interested in writing this after all, I hope you are too.

#### **Beatriz Malik:**

I was born in Bogotá, Colombia; my mother is Colombian, and my father is from the United States, of Polish origin. When I was 10 years old, I came to Spain with my father who worked as a civilian High School teacher at the US Torrejon Air Base. At 13 I went to Colombia, and at 15 I came back to Spain, where I have lived ever since (in different locations). I have attended several schools, both public and private, and have thus experienced 3 different national educational systems. In spite of all these constant changes and moving around, I did not do too badly in school, although I did have many gaps (i.e. Spanish Geography!!! or Latin, or some aspect of Calculus) as the curricula and the distribution of contents would be quite different from system to system. Nevertheless, I managed to graduate at the normal age, and enter University. Additionally, I had lots of problems in Spain with my residency and work permit, and I considered my diverse background and migration experiences quite an obstacle, until, as a graduate student at UNED (The Spanish Distance Education University), where I earned my degree and PhD in Education, I met Teresa Aguado, who was working in Intercultural Education, and started collaborating with her. She was crucial in helping me to value my background, encouraged me to enrol in a course on Social Mediators for Immigration in Schools, and also to apply for a fellowship to attend the Salzburg Seminar. I was accepted to Session 372 on Race and Ethnicity, which I can count among the most enriching experiences in my life, both professionally but above all personally. The people I met there were excellent and many of us have kept in touch. When we decided to submit a proposal for a trans-national collaboration project on Intercultural Education to the European Commission I invited some of the members of this session to be involved. Four of them are currently partners in the INTER project along with others whom we contacted from previous projects. It is a challenging and demanding project, with a varied partnership but it is a worthwhile and fun experience, in spite of the additional workload we all have. Apart from

all the things I am learning in the process and the products we are developing, I especially value the relationship with the people involved.

**Laura:**

I am from the Czech Republic. Over the past 10 years I have worked in the non-profit sector, focusing on multicultural education, mainly issues relevant to education of Romani (Gypsy) children. Thanks to the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, whose educational and teacher training projects I coordinated in my country, I learned a lot about prejudice and how it operates, about impact of insufficient educational policies as well as the importance, for humankind and individuals, of learning from past mistakes. In 1998 as a director of the New School Foundation I contributed to introduction of Romany teaching assistants into the official schooling system in my country. (It was a difficult battle and we managed to push the reform through just after to the so called "exodus" of Czech Roma to Canada and Western Europe in 1997 and subsequent international criticism of the Czech Republic when the education policy makers and public administrators started to take seriously voices of ordinary educators and civic organisations. Now I serve as an executive chair of an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) called Globea trans-border initiative for tolerance and human rights. I also teach at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague, focusing on multiculturalism in Europe and policies concerning ethnic minorities. In my PhD thesis I have focused on researching sustainable educational policies for multicultural societies using a comparative framework of Czech Republic and Scotland. My colleagues Beatriz and Margarita whom I met in 1998 at a Salzburg seminar approached me and offered cooperation on the INTER project. I am very happy that I can be a part of a truly intercultural project, not only from a subject angle, but also process-wise, including various misunderstandings and subsequent clarifications. Facing problems emanating from different cultural frameworks and peoples backgrounds as well as doubting one owns cognitive prejudice is a challenge that is very valuable for me as a professional as well as a human being.

**Teresa:**

I was born in Aragon, which is a region in Northern Spain and, I think that a part of myself is conditioned by my social, family and local origins. I was the first one in my family to achieve a university diploma, which is a very common experience for my generation and social condition. At that point in time, to get a university degree was a guarantee for getting a good job. I had decided to become a primary teacher. You may ask why and I would respond by saying that I wanted to be a teacher because, maybe, teachers were there, near me... and I did not know anything about other professions or careers.

I have been working as a primary teacher in very small towns for ten years and that has been a great intercultural experience for me. My pupils were all the pupils in the town and it was clear to me: everyone was different from one another. I had to change my mind about what the ideal/standard student is like. I had to change my mind about what to expect and how to work at school! It was the time of political transition in Spain and I was maturing as a person at the same time I was growing up as a teacher. I have been engaged in pedagogical reform movements, asking for political change, public school and liberty.

I have studied pedagogy - because I wanted to know what is the best way to teach and learn- and psychology (I am really curious about people!) at the UNED and obtained my

doctorate. This was again like moving from one cultural position to another, from practice to theory. I have always felt passionately about integrating both dimensions. Currently, I am coordinating the INTER Project and sharing with my partners a special intercultural collaboration. I am trying to use all my former experiences and at the same time enjoy and learn and especially, to build a space where cultural differences are part of what we call normality.

#### **Margarita:**

I was born and raised in Madrid, Spain but since I was a little girl I took a fancy to looking at other people's lives through my window. It was considered bad manners until I became an anthropologist. The way people manage their lives and solve their everyday challenges has always fascinated me and I hope it always will. Nevertheless my parents taught my first lessons on diversity and respect to me at home since they came from families who lived the Spanish Civil War from opposite sides. I have lived in Canada, the United States, Argentina and South Africa and learned about important parts of myself in all those (and some other) places living and listening to other people. I was invited join the INTER group by Beatriz Malik, who was a much appreciated fellow in Salzburg Seminar (session 372) where I also met Laura, Bernd and Olgerts as well. I felt that I was very welcome from the beginning (thanks to Teresa's style in coordination) but I was also very puzzled about what form my contribution could take. I thought I was too theoretical to work on such a concrete product as a Guide for Intercultural Education. Sometimes I argue too much (but I learned from Bernd that too much arguing could be funny but it does not work). Sometimes I have to rush over the work and jump to conclusions discarding some pieces or work which I very much valued (but I learned from Teresa that there is no work at all if it is only in my mind!) Sometimes I feel frustrated if some of my colleagues do not meet deadlines as I think I should. However, I feel I am much respected and am encouraged. I learn a lot, have fun with them, and I am actually even writing for the Guide!

#### **Olgerts:**

Olgerts Tipans, lecturer of University of Latvia, born, brought up and still living in Riga, Latvia: my country always has been on crossroads of merchant's routes, as well as routes of invaders troops. As consequence of that is evidence of presence of different cultures and a big number of ethnic groups living in Latvia. Some of them can be thought of as "old minorities", some of them consist of "newcomers". The integration of them is not merely an issue of scientific interest but a precondition for a successful development of society as a whole. Naturally, it is of course one of my personal interests also.

#### **Alan:**

I was born and brought up in the central part of England in the small country market town of Leek in the county of Staffordshire. The main industry was textiles, and in particular, the weaving of silk. At an early age I decided that this was an industry I did **NOT** want to be employed in like most of my family! I left school at the age of 16 and pursued a career as a professional engineer. By the age of 22 I had qualified with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the local university. I was the first member of my family ever to enter university. I practiced as a professional engineer until the age of 25 and then decided that I wanted to be involved in the education of young people and so undertook a one-year post graduate course to enable me to teach in Secondary (age 11 to 18 years)

schools. After a number of years I left school teaching and moved to the School of Education at Nottingham Trent University as a Senior Lecturer in teacher training specializing in Design & Technology. It is from here that I began to develop an interest in the teaching of the European Dimension in education as seen from the perspective of design, culture and the environment.

I have organized an extensive range of courses involving the movement of students under the Socrates ERASMUS programme and co-ordinated projects in the area of distance learning and collaboration between European Teacher Training Institutions.

I am currently involved not only in the INTER Project but also with two other Comenius 3 Networks involving Regional Identity and Active Citizenship (RIAC) and Environmental Education (SEED). All this is driven by a passion to contribute to understanding and respect for all of us as Europeans living in a culturally rich diverse environment. Being a member of the INTER Project gives me the opportunity to work with people from diverse backgrounds, having diverse experiences which in turn broadens my experience helping me to achieve my goals. As we meet, work and socialize together I have come to value them as my friends as well as working colleagues.

Caridad:

I was born and lived my early years in a little place (in the land of wild bulls) where no electric light or running water run in the houses. Some years later I attended a boarding school for seven years in a tiny historical city, where, as Margarita did, I wore a school uniform (but unlike Margarita I had ambiguous feelings about it, since uniforms in that city brought me some status, and we nevertheless managed to personalize them). I finished there as a Primary school teacher (knowing that there is always something new waiting afterwards) and from that point in my life has followed a criss-crossed line instead of a straight one. After attending University looking for Natural Sciences but always ending up in Humanities (in spite of my own wishes) I met Margarita at a very important moment in my life - I was pregnant with twins!. Some years later, when I was about to complete writing a book with Margarita, her friends asked me to join the INTER Project (when working with Margarita means that there is always a need to be involved in strange things), which gave me the opportunity to link Anthropology and Education. The INTER Project was a challenge for me since I have never worked in such a big team before with people from different places. I feel I was very brave but also daring because my English wasn't good enough even to communicate, but thanks to my colleagues I am able to communicate my ideas and my feeling. As a result my English is really improving (Teresa said in our last Virtual conference that after writing what I wrote I could never say again that I do not speak English). I am not sure about what can I give to the group, but I am really aware of the value of what I have learned so far.

Vineta:

I was born in Riga, the capital of Latvia. All of my family members are Latvians and at first my identity associates me with the ethnical aspect of identity – with the Latvian identity. The most popular qualities of Latvian are self-consciousness, tolerance, a strong feeling of responsibility to work and it is likely that these qualities influenced the formation of my identity too. Secondly, as my parents are in higher education, I had no doubt that I would study at university.

The other side of my identity is connected with political changes in our state: when the soviet rule collapsed I was 17 years of age. Most of the people in Latvia, as in other Baltic countries at that time, were interested in politics. Maybe because of these political processes during my studies of philology in university I had interdisciplinary interests. After graduating from the university I was involved as researcher in such interdisciplinary field as sociolinguistics and it was this that directed me to the area of multicultural education. Since 2001 I have been working as a director of the Multicultural Education Centre at the Faculty of Education and Psychology of the University of Latvia. In the INTER Project I was involved as a member of the Faculty. All the project team are different but during this project we have become very good friends - differences enriched and I like it very enormously.

Ivar:

I was born and grew up on a rural place in the south-eastern part of Norway. The Norwegian national identity is build upon the historical picture of the farmers who own their own farms on places like my birthplace. However, my parents, and most of the parents in the neighbourhood, were not farmers: Our ancestors had worked for the farmers, but they had never had farms of their own. As a boy, my identity was connected to this historical fact. When the teachers told us about Norwegian history I did not identify with it.

My identity was also connected to history in a different manner: I was not to live the same lives as my parents. Education should bring me a better life. This was the most important thing I learned at home, and this was an important part of my identity. My parents wanted to help me with the schoolwork, but very often they did not accept what the school taught: The knowledge and the values of the school were not theirs. Very early I learned not to tell them too much about the content of the lessons.

I have always been fond of sport. In 1994 some of the competitions in the winter Olympics took place in my birthplace. However, I did not go to watch it. It was a culture clash: The place where my relatives fought to survive was turned into a commercial playground for international sport athletes.

My first job was as a teacher in a fishing village in the north-eastern part of Norway, near the Russian boarder, in a culture very different from my own. Here I experienced the conflict between the central south and the peripheral north of the country. For some years identified strongly with the culture in the village and the people trying to survive in the Barents Ocean.

Since the eighties I have lived in the eastern part of Oslo together with people coming from all over the country and all over the world. As a professional I have been interested in education, culture, disability and migration, about difference and the right to be different. This is also why I entered the INTER group.

Inés:

I have grown up in a big family in a small village in the north of Spain. In my supportive and quite open-minded family I have developed some attitudes and values towards life, like responsibility, respect, love, or humility. The (probably) restrictive and constraining rural environment has encouraged me to go beyond it. Being "good" at school (meaning that I had good qualifications, did not talk too much in the classroom, behaved correctly etc.) and with my brothers and sisters as a model, I couldn't think of an option other than

going to university. I moved to the closest city for that, and it was clear for me that I wanted to study education. The importance of family and school in our lives was reason enough for me to pursue that field further. My vocation became stronger when I went back to school, this time as an educator, before finishing my degree. To analyse what was happening, work with teachers and students, etc. was a fascinating job. Later on I moved to Madrid to improve my studies. It was very hard to experience how difficult it was to find a job where I could develop my knowledge and skills, and I sometimes lost my enthusiasm. However, I met Jose Antonio, who told me about a scholarship in UNED and I had no doubts about it. It was in the year 2000 when I met Teresa (she was my boss!) and worked on an institutional evaluation of the quality of universities for one year. She encouraged me to do a doctorate, and I got a scholarship from the Ministry of Education to do it. She has involved me in some of the research projects she coordinates, the INTER Project being one of them. I have been on it from the very beginning, and was very enthusiastic about it. My 'problem' is that I try to control everything and do too much and can't do it as well as I would like to! Anyway, it is a great opportunity for learning and doing something together.

Bernd:

Born into a very local, alpine and traditional culture in the mountains of Salzburg in Austria, I was however soon attracted by other cultures through travelling and vacations. After school I spent 3 months in Spain, and 1 year in Mexico - the latter soon became my "second patria". I consequently studied (romance and slavic) languages, and later I worked and lived in Bulgaria, Belgium, Brazil and the USA. From our manifold identities, for me my "ethnic" identity is of low importance, as opposed to my education, profession, status, family role, etc. My professional sub-culture meant always collaborating, publishing and living trans-nationally, and in fact today I have more contacts and friends outside Austria than inside. In political terms this means I support the European integration and enlargement processes, as the diversity of Europe for me is its richness - and the challenge to overcome national cultures (and the harm the insistence on them caused in the 20th century). In my professional work, trans-cultural components are most important, at the global level, however, I truly feel a European, and equally at home in Berlin, Bucharest, Lisbon, Montpellier, Riga, Skopje, or Toledo. Also my two children are trans-nationally European, with Austrian and Italian roots.

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You have just finishing reading what we want to present to you as a critical incident: We have tried to show you the personal variation in lifestyles, identities, experiences and motives to work together. Our purpose in doing this is to show how the subject of this module - Diversity - is in constant evidence anytime and anywhere in our lives. We would like the reader to use it as an example to think about her/his own workgroup focusing on individual differences and ways to benefit from them and cope with difficulties this variation provokes.

Can you relate this incident to any group of people around you?

What do you think of our group? Has this way of showing our differences together suggested to you a different way to think about groups in your own environment?

Can we say that this is the usual way for people to create and behave within groups but that we are not used to putting it like this?



## Information

### 1. Homogeneity and Diversity as trends in the learning process:

In this section we are going to define the ideas of *homogeneity* and *diversity*, helping the reader to identify both in her/his environments, and show the benefits and difficulties we see in switching from a mostly homogeneous perspective (which is currently operating in most classrooms) to a diversity perspective in the process of learning which acknowledges and works out of individual variation.

Both *homogeneity* and *diversity* are in fact very abstract ideas and difficult to identify in everyday life. They act more or less as poles of a continuum where both are in play at the same time although to different degrees. We speak of a homogeneous perspective when we stress similarities among individuals and act as if they all think/behave/learn/expect more or less the same. In a similar way, we speak of a diversity perspective when we are aware of individual variation, acknowledge it and focus on it to design useful strategies for the double process of teaching/learning to take place in our classrooms/environments.

*Homogeneity* means to be of the same kind as the other, formed of parts that are of the same type.

*Diversity* means the opposite, i.e. variety, to be composed of different types or formed of different parts.

Can you identify these two trends in your actual classroom/work group?

What could be identified in your classroom as diverse and what elements are homogeneous?

Please specify and write them down before you resume reading.



Here are some ideas about classrooms that you can use and compare with your answers:

- **Age:** Your class has been created as a cluster of pupils following the homogeneity criterion by grouping people of the same age, assuming that this homogeneity of age will group pupils at the same stage of development, both physical and intellectual.
- **Sex:** If you teach at a government sponsored school or even in most private schools, you will also have your students grouped following a diversity criterion regarding sex: both girls and boys are in the same class. School authorities are in no doubt of the advantages of this method of grouping students of both sexes in classrooms in spite of their assumed gender differences and developmental paths. Some adjustments have been thought to be necessary to address these assumed gender differences as in the case of Physical Education/gym classes when teachers set different standards to be met for boys and girls (usually somewhat lower for girls than for boys). Nevertheless some parents and some educational institutions do not follow the diversity criterion to group boys and girls in the same classes, assuming that their gender differences do hinder the learning process of the pupils (in Spain this was the situation in all schools some years ago under the Franco dictatorship).

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What is your own opinion?

Write down what you think are the advantage and disadvantages of having boys and girls grouped in the same classes

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- **Ethnicity:** Ethnicity is also a homogeneity/diversity criterion. Pupils do not only put different ethnic labels into each other, they also put labels on themselves. History, Religion, country of origin, etc. is used in the identity building process to construct the ethnic self. Within classrooms cultural diversity may perhaps be smaller: globalisation, worldwide communication, cultural standardisation..., but this does not mean that ethnicity will disappear. In classrooms all over the world we can see processes of ethnification. Young people, immigrants, religious groups..., make ethnicity an instrument of their own identity building. "In other words, categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information" (Barth 1969:9). The multicultural challenge is the opposite: Ethnicity will survive, and ethnic conflicts may even flourish as a result of contact and cultural homogenisation. Similar processes are also taking place among groups of disabled people, for instance deaf people think about themselves as a cultural linguistic minority, not as disabled.

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What is your opinion?

What is the ethnic identity of your students?

Do they make the classroom inclusive for all?

Do your students identify themselves with each other or do they construct ethnic borders among themselves?

- 
- **Language:** We can also analyse language as a homogeneity/diversity criterion. However, it is a more complicated issue. Perhaps some questions would help us to understand the matter:
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Do your students understand a common language?

What is the relationship between vehicular language (the language you are using to teach) and the language commonly used by your students?

Which language do they speak at home?

Which language is their mother tongue?

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If you gather enough information from your students in order to provide some answers to these questions you will be able to analyse if language in your classroom is a homogeneous criterion or if you have a variety of different individual experiences. The website below contains some recommendations in Spanish to help teach students who do not know the vehicular language: [http://www.cult.gva.es/dgoiepl/Inmigracion/web2\\_castellano/default.htm](http://www.cult.gva.es/dgoiepl/Inmigracion/web2_castellano/default.htm)

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- **Class, Background:** Social class and background (places where members of the group were born, etc.) need to be kept in mind when we speak about diversity and homogeneity.

There are many other trends you can have in mind in order to sort out homogenisation criterion from diversity criterion in your classroom or in your work group.

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Can you identify some of them?

Do not focus solely on differences, you should also have in mind what your students have in common, or what you assume they have in common.

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## 2. Cultural diversity as a paradigm in Education

All these ideas or trends on homogeneity and diversity become a little tricky when we speak about *cultural diversity* (see the definition of this concept in the Glossary). Cultural diversity in education is not associated with *individual* differences but only with those individual differences, which confront the norm or the model, we have in mind for *groups* of pupils and the behaviour of pupils. Spanish television broadcast an interview on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2003 with a schoolteacher on the subject of cultural diversity at his school (his answers can be representative for the opinions we have encountered generally in Spanish schools). He classified his culturally diverse students into four groups:

- a) immigrant students with a low academic level of achievement
- b) pupils lagging far behind the academic level of their age peers
- c) children of itinerant parents and for that reason undergoing a nomadic schooling
- d) pupils in need of special education.

We can easily find a common trend for these four groups. They all have difficulties in reaching the same level of school performance achievement when compared with their age peers (or their “reference” group in the school).

From an Anthropological perspective (though not restricted to Anthropological) this association between cultural diversity and deficiencies or lack of something is a perverse association.

Anthropologists understand cultural diversity (refer to the definition of this term in the Glossary) as the set of strategies and behaviours imagined and developed by human beings anywhere, anytime in order to survive and perpetuate themselves as a group by means of their descendants, throughout both time and space. If we adopt this perspective in our thinking, any difference in life style or norms and values whose reference leads us to understand people’s behaviour, is to be understood as part of, or the product of, cultural diversity. So that *in some way, we are all different from our fellow humans*, and for that reason *we are all, in some ways, diverse*.

*If we are all in some way different, we are also, in other ways similar to our fellow human beings.* In order to communicate with each other, our task is to find out what do we have in common (which will let us to build bridges between us in order to understand each other), and how we differ from others (in order to negotiate common expectations, norms and values to carry out common tasks, in living together). We think this perspective could be very useful in education, if we understand the process of learning as a common task.

When the group of learners (teacher/s-pupils and their communities) have been set up, two important tasks must be fulfilled from a diversity perspective as a starting point, namely:

- a) to find out explicitly both what we have in common and what differences each one of us has from each other (considering that we all have differences as well as similarities, and avoiding identifying deficiencies) and not assuming them in an implicit way.

b) to negotiation of common tasks, common aims, and the norms of behaviour which will allow us to reach these objectives as a group, paying attention to and respecting our individual differences (some of our goals are imposed on classes from outside, but we can still put them on the table as well and negotiate the ways in which to reach them in a similar manner).

To teach/learn from an Intercultural Education Perspective (which has been built from a perspective of diversity) means that we all - teachers, co-workers, students, parents, etc. - should learn to negotiate the norms and values that we share as a group and which will let us set up and reach our goals. This task could be harder for teachers than for students, since students are more used to it, even as an unconscious process, and teachers are more used to setting the rules and think they have the right to do it). All this process must be negotiated within the group, avoiding the traditional perspective of a teacher setting the norms of behaviour and the goals for the group and expecting the pupils to assimilate them in an implicit way, and behaving in line with this imposed framework. *If this perspective is adopted then concepts such as the model student and school failure will not make any sense. (See Module 6 devoted to Evaluation in this Guide)*

An example such as the critical incident we started this module with (the collection of short stories regarding the group diversity and motives to work together) would be very helpful at the start of each school term. Everyone could write or tell brief stories about themselves and share them with rest of the group. Everyone should reflect a little about him/herself, how she/he was raised and why she/he is now part of this particular group. Perhaps you could also think of different ways to make everyone's background and expectations explicit.

When human beings communicate they try to reach a balance between what we have in common with each other and in what ways we differ from each other. What we have in common enables us to know each other and from this minimum shared understanding we can move forward to exchange our differences. Differences are valuable since they challenge us and cause in us the desire to move towards understanding the other person's position, even when we do not agree with them.

To understand this process is to understand the foundations of how we develop human relationships, we are used to doing this process everyday, even when we are not explicitly aware of it. To try to assume that we are all the same, using a homogeneous perspective and expect the same from every individual within the group (a perspective based on homogeneity) makes, in our opinion, relationships *apparently* easier.

In our relationship with others, we are continuously making assumptions with regard to who they are and what they do. Attribution is a process whereby we search for information on the reason for other people's behaviour. This process is fulfilled when we finally find a reason, which seems plausible and credible. However, this explanation is based on our own perceptions, on information that we handle in a biased way. Our perception is never objective, but filtered by the expectations, goals and outcomes that we have when approaching and interacting with another person. It is also influenced by factors such as familiarity with the person, value assigned to that person, emotional attachment and previous experiences with other people of similar characteristics. How do these attributions relate to the construction of stereotypes? Refer to the Stereotype and Prejudice

definitions in the Glossary, and think how easy it is to oversimplify our interpretation of other people's characteristics and behaviours.

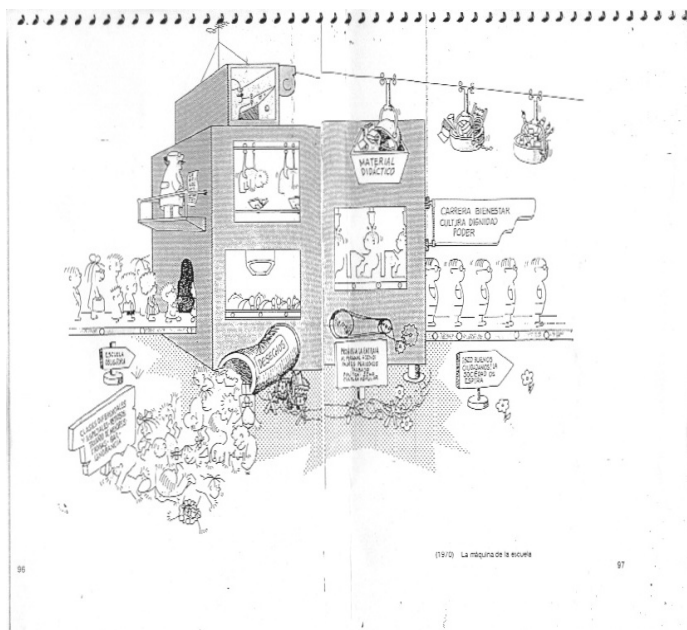
We have to also be aware of the different meaning we give to differences. Differences are not neutral, we value some differences above other ones, and we use the different value we place on some differences with respect to other ones as a material out of what we build and legitimise a social stratification of clusters of people or groups, as if they were reasons to explain that some differences entitle some people to more social privileges, and others to fewer rights. This is to say that there are superior skin colours or shades, superior religions to worship, superior places to be born or superior languages to speak, which entitle some people to more privileges and/or to a wider share of social power and goods. To demolish this type of argument, which we use in everyday life to legitimate an unfair distribution of power and privilege, we should all receive some kind of antiracist education, which will break up the association between certain differences with more or less access to power and privileges. It is said that by the time a child turns eight years old he or she has completely developed this type of racist argumentation with which she or he explains an unequal distribution of social power and privileges, blaming the victims of their dispossession on their own (worse) differences and backgrounds (see definitions of racism in the Glossary).

### 3. Some false benefits (in our opinion) of homogeneity in the process of Learning, and our arguments against them.

Let us take a look at what we think are some *false assumptions* we make when we use a homogeneous perspective in classrooms:

- To teach homogeneous groups is easier than to teach a diverse one, since homogeneity allows the teacher address the group as if it were only a single person (or of a group of persons all of them identical). Because students were born in the same year, they are supposed to understand, grasp and use knowledge at the same time and in consequence be tested by the same method with the same results. **Our argument against this assumption is that** by teaching in this manner we loose every student who doesn't fit the model for whatever the reasons. Each year we see in classrooms more and more students who do not fit *and do not feel that they belong*. In that way the gap between teachers' expectations toward students and students' expectations toward teachers keeps on widening. In this way Education is progressively loosing its focus, and as a consequence its value.
- Homogeneity, on the other hand, plays with the idea of justice, assuming that since all students are the same; they should be treated in the same way.

**Our argument against this assumption is that** to treat all students in the same way hides their personal variation, differences in opportunities, and backgrounds, and that despite them being born in the same year or living in the same neighbourhood, sometimes to treat them equally does not seem to be fair (look for the terms *equity* and *equality* in the Glossary).



### THE SCHOOL MACHINE

So we see more advantages in the idea of diversity, and also more difficulties. We will firstly elaborate on the advantages.

#### 4. The advantages and challenges regarding the idea of diversity in the process of learning, and some ideas to overcome the challenges.

In the first place, school environments are increasing in diversity each year, regardless of teachers' desires, and in consequence to act from a homogeneity perspective means to lose more and more students each year. We acknowledge here the increasing diversity both in our own societies and in regular classrooms (for example in Spain as a consequence of the enforcement of the law which makes it mandatory to integrate some pupils that were destined in the past to attend special institutions; or for example in Norway where deaf pupils have been recognized as having Sign Language as their first language, or Sami people have gained the right to be taught in their own language)

Secondly, we think that the whole class would benefit from the perspective of diversity in two ways:

- *Firstly*, increasing diversity means to increase students' exposure to different situations and backgrounds, and as a consequence to increase strategies and skills.

- *Secondly*, focusing on diversity will encourage us to abandon the idea of the model student. If students are not pressed to fit the abstract idea of the trend in homogeneity, some stress is going to be removed from them and in this way it will be easier to recognize individual merit in an individual way. This will create room to work on a positive self-image, improving each pupil abilities and capabilities and let them benefit from her/his classmates avoiding the general pictures of success and failure.

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*Have this idea in mind when you look at the personal short life-stories we encourage you to share with the group*

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In spite of all these advantages we are also aware of the enormous difficulties a teacher convinced of the merits of the diversity perspective will face within a current formal education system that has been designed to deliver teaching from a homogeneous perspective. Some changes must be made to teach from a perspective of diversity:

- First of all the ratio of students per teacher must be sensibly reduced. And that means spending significantly more money in Education.
- Secondly, specially trained staff should be employed to help teachers address students in an individual way (as for example mother tongue teachers). This also requires spending more money on Education.
- Thirdly, a lot of different resources must be developed and made easily available to teachers (there are already a considerable amount of resources, but they are not always easily available to teachers). Here again, we are speaking about more financial expenditure!
- Fourthly, the curriculum must be split in two parts
  1. a realistic core of indispensable fundamentals, involving strategies which consist of more than information, to be experienced by every pupil
  2. further information that must be regarded as a way to explain the fundamentals when there is room and interest in them. It is useless and can be harmful to set standards that are cannot be met by an increasing number of students each year.

None of these changes are the teachers' responsibility, they should be met through educational policies (See Module 5 on Educational Policies). However, there is still room to address all these issues from a diversity perspective if teachers (and other people involved in education) are fully convinced of its advantages and value. Teachers, parents, and school staff could develop different measures and strategies to both acknowledge and benefit from students' diversity.

The currently extended practice in some educational systems that breaks up the group to make smaller groups out of the original one is to be avoided, since again homogeneity is in this way pursued (See Module 7 on School Structure and Organization). All measures that involve excluding a group of students out from regular classrooms, keeping them

away from their classmates in any kind of special classes, are measures of this kind. Considering those pupils who fit the model and stay in regular classrooms and the ones who do not fit, for whatever the reasons, are excluded for different periods of time is an approach which tries to preserve homogeneity at least within the group of regular students. The completely heterogeneous group that exists in the classroom is expected to acquire the skills that are necessary to keep up with the regular class members. This is hardly the case. This group of students are always grouped under a negative label (the lack of something!) which emphasizes the pupils' shortcomings and does not pay any attention to their capabilities, except when they are progressively able to meet the expected standards, as in the case of a pupil who does not know the vehicular language (the language in which knowledge is being transmitted) and who is treated as illiterate in spite of his/her fluency in one or more languages.

A more useful approach, and more respectful towards the pupil, would be to solve this problem together within the classroom using the rest of the students as valuable resources in order to achieve it. Children learn languages quickly in regular environments *when they see the advantages of doing it*. In this way they are acquiring at the same time actual communication skills. In turn, his or her resources to communicate in such a difficult situation will benefit the skills of the rest of the class group.

There are different materials to learn Spanish as a second language available at: <http://www.educa.aragob.es/cpamanza/intercultural/inter.html>

The same could be said about many different situations which do not involve the learning of a language (See Module 8 on Teaching and Learning Strategies).

For example, when a Muslim girl enters a classroom veiled, instead of treating her using our stereotyped and negative prejudiced assumptions (possibly picked up from the mass media without a single direct experience), a teacher could invite her to eventually explain (in a very respectful way) to the class her reasons for wearing the veil and her dress code. A teacher should be concerned with the wellbeing of this pupil in class as a priority over his or her own opinions on the matter. Perhaps an adult who wears the veil could be also invited to talk to the class, explaining her motives for wearing the veil as a personal choice that has to do with her traditions and background (in the video which complements this Guide we have an example of an interview with a girl wearing the veil, where she talks about how she feels about it. It could be used as an excellent example in order to raise the question, even if no veiled girls are part of the class)

The same could be said if a girl doesn't want to fully participate in gym classes or swimming lessons because of the required exposure of her body. The whole class could think about ways in which to solve the situation (instead of this incident being kept away from them). Students can thus acquire a critical understanding of different situations, they will exercise their arguments and opinions, and they will build a rich background regarding conflict-solving skills.

If gaps in school competencies are found in a pupil, class members could be fully involved in different ways to help solve these gaps. The pupil will learn more easily from other students and they will reinforce what they have learned by teaching it.



It is especially important that in this kind of process and involvement each pupil feels valuable in a different way, avoiding the attachment of labels of success or failure to individuals. Perhaps a person might need help in a certain way but she/he should feel also that he/she could also help others in another way (See Module 8 on Teaching and Learning Strategies).

Even if teachers cannot change curriculum, they could still approach it as a more general reference. A teacher should be able to have the competency to extract the main ideas from the general curriculum, and ensure that in one way or other every pupil is progressively acquiring what is most important, even if at a different pace. Further information or ideas could be left for those more interested in the area. If more attention is paid to the very core, and the whole class is totally involved in the process of acquisition as a collective task, further information could be possibly regarded as an extra, to be grasped when it is really needed or the group are interested in it once everyone has the foundations. (See Module 8 on Learning Strategies)

The testing of students should be also approached on a more individual basis. If class participation and the involvement of the students in the learning process of their classmates becomes part of the testing process itself perhaps exams could play a less prominent role and more individual attention given the group. (See Module 6 dedicated to Evaluation in this Guide, it contains a lot of alternative ideas for evaluating).

If education in general becomes a group task instead of an individual one, the whole class would benefit more from the process, and every pupil could play a significantly active role in learning instead of a passive (and sometimes boring) one. It is within this framework of learning as a collective task that diversity will be regarded as a richness for the entire group instead of a problem, an obstacle to them individually reaching a standard set goal (See also Module 4 in this Guide dedicated to Theoretical Assumptions, and Module 8 on Learning Strategies).



## activities and suggestions

The main goal of this section is to propose activities to get to know our environments by paying attention to both perspectives - homogeneity and diversity. We will try to help the reader in understanding the unconscious cognitive processes which take place in teaching/learning, and we also want the reader to increase her/his ability to benefit from diversity and to cope with its challenges.

### Activity 1. Discovering Uniforms

Read the following autobiographical piece:

"From the age of four until I was a teenager of fifteen, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, from 8 in the morning till 5 in the afternoon, I had to wear a school uniform. This consisted of a grey skirt, a white blouse, a grey cardigan and grey socks, plus a red-and-white striped overall when inside the school building.

I hated it!

We hated it so much that we lobbied the school authorities for years just to be allowed to wear trousers, at least in winter. We were only given the opportunity to choose the colour of our cardigans and socks between grey and navy. Still we hated it so much that we wrote large numbers in ink on the backs of our overalls as if we were wearing prison uniforms (the wide stripes indeed helped!). I was so proud of my number, it was my personal number and the only way to personalise my clothes, it was also an act of defiance that teachers chose not to fight, for whatever the reasons, perhaps they were even sympathetic.

Throughout my life I have heard a lot of different ideas associated with school uniforms, most of them awful! These reasons fell, more or less, into two different (sometimes tangled) lines of argument:

They love school uniforms because they don't have to think about what to choose to wear (mothers are especially fond of this one). They also say that uniforms hide differences among children, especially differences of class and finance.

I still hate uniforms and I also loathe these reasons. The first one is in itself a metaphor - uniforms let you go ahead without the need to think. This is clear enough.

The second one is a little more perverse in my opinion, and requires an explanation. They try to eradicate differences among children, they even try to erase their personalities. But I remember vividly how my classmates and I managed to concentrate all our differentiation in shoes, coats, bookcases, umbrellas, lunchboxes, wristwatches, earrings, pens et cetera, even a tiny crocodile will do. We were totally aware of our style, money and class differences, but were only allowed to show them on those small places on our bodies. So we did it, but we wore our differences in defiance, we never learned of a way to deal with them. We were all supposed to look identical, but we still knew we didn't. We were never taught what to do with this gap.

Even when we wear the same clothes, we are still not the same, and we've got to learn to live our lives being different among differences".

**Margarita del Olmo**

- **What is your opinion about uniforms?**
- **Do you/did you wear one?**
- **If you do not like it, why is this so?**
- **How do you challenge it?**
- **Are you able to find out about any other "uniforms" (using this word in a metaphorical way) that we expect learners or colleagues to wear?**
- **Do you impose these metaphorical "uniforms" on your students?**

Write about how you feel about it.

## Activity 2. Confronting homogeneity and stereotypes

When teachers speak about their classrooms with sentences such as “this is a very dynamic group”, “this is a very passive group of students”, “teenagers are rebellious” “Nursery school children are affectionate”, et cetera, they are thinking from the homogeneity perspective.

Gather similar phrases and sentences and critically analyse them to discover if the same sentence will sound reasonable when individually applied to every member of the group.

- **What happens next?**
- **What are these sentences telling you about the individuals?**
- **What are they useful for in your relationship with the class?**
- **If they don't tell you much about the individuals of your classroom, do you not think they are deceiving you every time you use them?**
- **Do you not think they are in fact hiding personal variation and richness?**
- **Are you making a grey picture out of a complex colourful group?**
- **How would you, as a teacher, like to be referred to with the following sentences?: “Nowadays teachers do not have any authority”, “teachers have too many holidays”, and „teachers repeat the same things year after year”.**
- **How would you feel?**

If you think this is unfair, students will surely feel the same way when you use a collective label (either positive or negative) when you speak about them. (See the definitions of Prejudice and Stereotype in the Glossary).

## Activity 3. Discovering diversity in your environment

Before starting this activity go to the Glossary of this Guide and look up the words Prejudice and Stereotype.

Write down at least two individual features (cognitive, affective characteristics, and academic and social skills) you think characterise each pupil in your classroom.

**Can you summarise them paying due respect to their diversity at the same time?**

It is not as easy as using a given sentence (the ones we used in the last activity) but it is fairer. Do the same activity but now try to describe your colleagues at your school.

Refer to the stereotype and prejudice definitions you looked up at the beginning. You will see that to give labels to groups of people has its advantages, but also disadvantages once acquired. We refrain from adding information about this group of people and, as a consequence, we are thinking with oversimplified information which does not enable us

to look at the complex picture of human behaviour. Remember also what has been said about the attribution of characteristics and behaviour to other people, in terms of our perceptions.

#### Activity 4. Are differences all the same?

Once you have finished activity 3 you will have a list of features you have used to describe individuals.

- Do you think all these features are the same, or do you think instead that some of them are more important compared to the rest?
- Which ones would you choose if you had to and why?

#### Activity 5. Differences are the same but we value them differently

- Which differences did you choose in activity #3?
- Why do you prefer some of them in preference to some of some others?

The answer to this question has to do with values and with what societies consider right and wrong.

- Can you find out the values related to the differences you have chosen?

Here you have an example of the values desirable in a teacher in a specific time and place that you can relate to quality criterion discussed in module 7:



Translation:

- Not to get married. The contract will be automatically cancelled if she does get married.
- Not to make the acquaintance of men
- To be at home between.....:00 pm and 6:00am, except when attending school activities
- Not to patronise the ice-parlours of the city
- Not to leave the city under any circumstance without a permit of the President of the Delegates Council
- Not to smoke. This contract will be null and void if the teacher is found smoking
- Not to drink beer, wine or whisky. This contract will be null and void if the teacher is found drinking beer, wine or whisky
- Not to ride in cars with men except for her father or brother
- Not to wear colourful shiny clothes
- Not to dye her hair
- To wear at least two pieces of underwear
- Not to wear dresses more than five centimetres above the ankles
- Keep the classroom tidy:
- Sweep floor of the classroom at least once a day
- mop the floor of the classroom at least once a week with hot water
- clean the blackboard at least once a day
- start a fire by 7 am so as to have the room warm by 8 am, when the children arrive
- Not to wear face-powder, not to wear make-up, not to apply any lipstick.

- **Do you agree with all of the rules?**

**INTER PROJECT**

### Activity 6. Diamond ranking exercise to help you think about inclusion

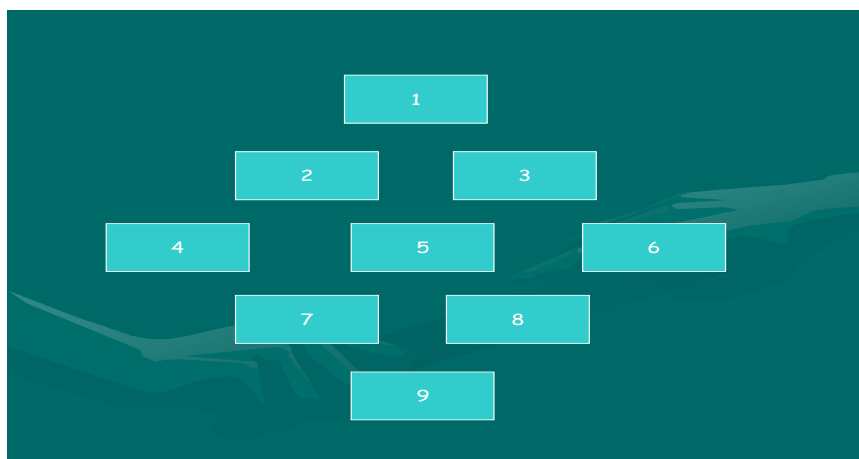
There are nine concepts listed below. Copy them onto pieces of paper. Feel free to substitute your own ideas for any of them, but you need to work with nine concepts. In groups of three or four, do a diamond ranking exercise in which you as a group decide between you which (in your view) is the most important idea for INCLUSION. Next, decide which are the next two most important ideas, then three, then two again, ending up with the one you think is less important than the others (see the diagram below).

This is not a competition, there are no “right or wrong” answers; merely a game to get you to think about the respective ideas. You could easily play an adapted version with your own students/children in a school.

The 9 Statements:

1. Tolerance and respect for others
2. Strong opinions about issues
3. Willingness to allow others their point of view
4. Everyone has an equal right to vote
5. Notions of being fair to a minority
6. The majority decides
7. A strong/charismatic leader to hold the factions together
8. Becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of your neighbourhood
9. AS A GROUP, YOU DECIDE THE NINTH STATEMENT AND WRITE IT DOWN

You should now end up with your priorities arranged in a diamond shape as shown below:



## Activity 7. Draw and talk about mental maps

Participants have to draw individual maps which will show the neighbourhood (it could be the town or just the neighbourhood if you live in a big city). It is better to draw the maps so that you can show them on a screen (it could be acetates or pieces of paper if you are able to scan them). This map drawing should take about 5 to 10 minutes. Afterwards in pairs or small groups participants should spend between 10 and 15 minutes making a list of common elements they are able to identify on the individual maps. Participants should think about those common elements in terms of: what do they mean and how do they relate to their authors. Afterwards, the teacher will show the rest of the class some different maps and will comment on them. Following this, everyone should be engaged in a debate. Here are some reflective questions for the debate:

- **What do the maps have in common and how do they differ among themselves?**
- **What can they tell you about the authors, and how they think about their same surroundings in a different way?**
- **What is it possible to infer about the values and way of life of the people who drew the maps? The teacher could use what Perception Geography has to say about mental maps.**

You can find materials (in Spanish) to do more activities on diversity for secondary students at the following address:

[http://www.educarm.es/materiales\\_diversidad/start\\_ns.htm](http://www.educarm.es/materiales_diversidad/start_ns.htm)



## proposals for collaboration

The goal of this section is the same as the previous one, but at a different level. Previously it was an individual goal, here we will try to suggest activities to continue them in collaboration with other people in the school environment.

### PROPOSAL 1: An Intercultural Week?

An Intercultural week is a common current event in schools nowadays which involves the whole school. They usually involve the displaying of food, music, clothes, crafts, photos, etc. which represents the different backgrounds of the student and teacher population.

- **What do you think of these kind of activities?**
- **Do you value them as positive or negative activities?**
- **Are they showing individual diversity in schools?**
- **Do they show important qualities about the individuals who comprise the school population?**

Here are some clues to help you think about them: they have very positive advantages, since they familiarise everybody with the places where others were born and with some colourful, real and indeed important features of people's backgrounds. They could also raise a curiosity to learn more about these places. However, there are also some disadvantages, since they place diversity in this particular week and allow us to (possibly) forget about it the rest of the time. They also display only the simplest features of diversity, the ones that do not challenge the current norm. They also stereotype societies, places and people under simple labels associated with a handful of features which are not really complex. They only let us look at diversity in a superficial way which says little about individual variations which are constantly present in classrooms. They do not address diversity as in the way we all are, but only as if the people with foreign backgrounds were the only diverse ones. Have this ideas in mind next time your school schedules its next Intercultural week and think of what you can do to improve it as real diversity event instead of a "Benetton display".

### **PROPOSAL 2: Diversity look at the School**

We think that a good way to display diversity is to show multiple different ways of looking at the same thing. You can do it by using a variety of experiences, but we think the school itself could conduct a very worthwhile experiment with additional advantages (i.e. getting a critical overview on it). Ask some colleagues to participate, and ask everyone (teachers included) to tell, sing, draw, play, write, etc. about the school to be displayed for the whole centre. Treat all collaborations with the same encouragement and value them the same. Arrange a display where everyone has the same opportunities, attention, time, space, etc. In this way everybody will be able to perceive diversity as a positive thing which enriches the display itself. Do have in mind the definition of Cultural Diversity which you will find in the Glossary of the Guide (See also Module 3 on School/Home/Community).

### **PROPOSAL 3: Improving our environment**

A project to involve different levels in the same school (students, teachers, parents, school staff, town or city administrations, etc.).

Participants should, first, critically look at their environments (their school, street, neighbourhood or city) and think what can be done to improve them, You should be picking up elements which can be improved (noise, pollution, children safety, architectural barriers, or urban landscapes, meeting places, playgrounds, parks, etc.). Secondly, eve-



ryone should think of, and write down, ideas to solve problems in order to improve the neighbourhood. Thirdly, the proposals must be shared and discussed in order to articulate a collective action, which can be of one of the following types: (a) to raise citizen's conscientiousness, and (b) to lobby for new regulations).

This activity should demonstrate that different people looking at the same environment from a critical perspective will yield a rich and diverse perception of this environment, and a complex store of answers to solve and improve our environments.

#### PROPOSAL 4: Cultural Relativism

A useful tool to deal with diversity is cultural relativism. Please look at the definition in the Glossary of the Guide. Let us use a paradigmatic example: A girl in a classroom wearing the veil. Please write down the reasons you have for or against the use of the veil. Be as honest as possible. Now invite a person in your community who has different reasons regarding it (if you do not wear it, bring in a person who does), and ask her about her motivation to wear or to not wear it (depending on the case). Then compare the two lists of reasons and try to find out which are the values and beliefs that support each list. If you are able to understand, comprehend and respect the other list (the one that is not yours), you are then thinking from the perspective of cultural relativism, able to discover the logic which relates values and behaviour and which gives meaning to different conduct. However, you should still be wearing the veil or not wearing it according to your own moral values.

You can keep on practising cultural relativism picking up similar examples.



## planning and adapting curriculum

In this section we will provide teachers with activities and suggestions to work on diversity in their own classrooms at two different levels:

- Strategies to critically analyse the academic curriculum and to adapt it
- Strategies to help students to live with a diversity perspective and value it in a positive way

We will also include here some general ideas or recommendations to adapt any curriculum from a perspective of diversity, you should check out if the curricula:

1. Shows wholly and coherently the social diversity of the environment

2. Shows people from different environments, backgrounds and lifestyles as being able to take decisions about their own lives
3. Includes different customs and attitudes from the perspective of cultural relativism, which is to understand them within the context where they were produced, taking care to avoid influencing them from our own perspective or judged in accordance to our own beliefs and values
4. Shows role models from different traditions and perspectives whose views are presented positively and valued
5. Promotes a positive image of any group and avoids presenting anyone of them as more important or better than the other ones
6. Avoids stereotyping groups or people from different groups
7. Gender roles are treated equally avoiding judgement according to our current set of values
8. Languages of different groups are appreciated equally and presented as valuable resources for communicating
9. Stories about the past should be presented as a shared memory and not as a discourse of dominant elites (see, for example, Takaki, 1998). Each student should feel that he/she belongs to, and could recognise him/herself in, the continuation of the historical discourse from the present moment in time.

### 1.- A critical analysis of the curriculum

You have to look at the curriculum to find out contradictions between a diversity perspective and homogeneous assumptions toward the students, requirements to promote to the next level, criteria to form the groups of students, norms to regulate collective behaviour, etc. Once you are aware of them you will be able to change a few of them but you can also have them all in mind as a means to challenge homogeneity at large, making exceptions, adapting pupils' needs to school expectations, and working from the perspective of equity instead of from one of homogeneous equality (look at the Glossary for definitions on equity and equality).

### 2.- Change the textbooks

When you use textbooks it is very important that you have in mind each and every individual who attends your class and think about them. Look to see if their experiences, environments, expectations, backgrounds are present or not in the books, and what kind of images about themselves are they learning there. You should modify textbooks (giving alternative examples or editing their contents when necessary, with the help of the students whenever possible). The area of Social Sciences is especially fitted for this, and especially dangerous too, since usually History is written from a single perspective. Philosophy, Ethic, Citizenship, etc., are also subjects to which special attention should be

paid. Nevertheless subjects such as Maths, Physics and so on, are also able to be changed by using examples from everyone's backgrounds. Areas involving body performance and art are easily adapted from a diversity perspective. Your goal should be that everyone in your classroom feels represented, respected, recognised, and valued when working with the class curriculum.

### 3.- Adapt the curriculum with the students

You can work collaboratively with the students themselves, asking them to make suggestions to adapt units, contents, examples, procedures, tools, schedules, programmes, etc. modifying them according to their own interests/motivations.

For instance, the core content of a chapter is the city, the urban landscape. What are the main issues that must be addressed in this chapter? The core issue is presented to the students, and the rest is negotiated and agreed through consensus:

- **Which cities are we going to study?**
- **What do we want to know about them, and why?**
- **What does it have to do with my place of residence, with my daily life as a citizen?**
- **How are we going to do it?**
- **What materials are we going to use?**
- **How and where are we going to find the information?**
- **What will the students do?**
- **What will the teacher do?**
- **How many days and hours will we spend on this project / unit?**
- **What schedule (mornings, early afternoon, etc.) will we establish?**

It can also be agreed upon which are the minimum objectives to be achieved by all students, and if additional objectives are set for those who want to research further.

### 4.- Co-operative learning

This is a strategy which will let us not only work from a diversity perspective, but also to achieve the best advantage. If you plan learning in your classroom as a collective enterprise, everyone will be able to give his/her best by helping others in areas he/she is at their best and, at the same time, benefit from others' abilities. One technique you can use is to break up the whole class into smaller groups making them as diverse as possible from all angles. You should create a system of "multi-diverse co-operative groups" where the bigger the diversity, the better the results. In this way you will be able to implement not only academic co-operative learning but also collaboration in every aspect of the process and challenges of learning. But you should be able to deal with difficulties

also, and here, conflict resolution techniques will help you in solving contradiction and difficulties. One of the best techniques of conflict resolution is to work sympathetically to help your students to be able to forget themselves for a moment and try to fit into the shoes of the other person you are having difficulties with.

## 5.- Making expectations explicit

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When we deal with everyday life, we work with schemes that let us predict other persons behaviour and in this way adapt ours to the relationship. The problem with these schemes is that they are usually implicit, because what we expect from others we do not usually reveal.

We have frequently heard students say that they sometimes do not know what teachers expect from them. On these occasions they felt puzzled and disoriented, because they do not know clearly what the ultimate goal is.

We think that to make expectations explicit is a fair way to improve relationships. This can be also be a technique to avoid conflicts and to help to solve them when they arise. It is also an excellent way to deal with diversity when homogeneity is not the rule. If we assume people are different and they do not behave, or have to behave, in the same way to fit the model, then to make expectations explicit is an absolute essential.

This process must be carried out in many ways, first it must be done from pupil to teacher and from teacher to pupil. Students also have their expectations towards teachers and it will be useful if they make them explicit. Students should also do this among themselves as much as possible too. A further step would be to finish making expectations explicit by setting agreements and consensus or general understanding on expectations, challenges to be met, and goals to be reached. This could be a valuable activity to be done at the beginning of each school year or even in collaboration with other teachers or colleagues. You could get everyone to openly ask each other these questions:

- **What do you expect from me?**
- **What do you expect from your colleagues?**
- **What do you expect from your classmates?**



## specific resources and additional links

### Websites

<http://www.acodden.org/info/index.cfm?a=6>, is a web page which contains examples of "A Classroom of Differences" from France (in French), The Netherlands, Belgium (either in French and German), Germany and Italy. Each example is divided into different sections (About, Goals and methods, Philosophy and theory, Exercises, Partners and National and European Activities).

<http://www.mediation-interculturelle.com/accueil.htm> offers documents and information about diversity (in French) from the perspective on Intercultural Education.

A very well organised website of the University of California in Santa Cruz: <http://www.crede.ucsc.edu/tools/tools.html>, offers (in English) specific tools to work in classrooms from the perspective of diversity, although its proposals are focused and designed for the US milieu.

<http://www.nodo50.org/igualdadydiversidad/grupos.htm> You can find and download here free of charge materials (in Spanish) used by the workshops of the Congress "Construir la escuela desde la diversidad y para la igualdad" (Building the school from diversity for equality" (2001).

A team of mediators dedicated to diversity and inclusion has been organised by the Manchester Council <http://www.manchester.gov.uk/education/diversity/>

A link (in Portuguese) dedicated to integration in general, with several sections about Gypsy minority children:

<http://www.acime.gov.pt/modules.php?name=Content&pa=shhowpage&pid=40>, the page is well organised and contains information structured for an easy access.

<http://www.edualter.org/> A webpage in Spanish and Catalan containing lots of resources for Intercultural Education, including bibliography and resources to work in classrooms.

A webpage in Catalan showing resources, documents and discussion forums, there many links to other issues related to Intercultural Education: <http://www.peretarres.org/mcec/interculturalitat/presentacio.html>

<http://www.escuelalibre.org/AulaAbierta/N%FAmeros/aulaindicenumeros.htm> Is a webpage in Spanish which contains the annual periodical "AULA ABIERTA", its # 1 dedicated to Intercultural and Antiracist" will let you get different materials you can download or print free of charge. These materials are great for reflecting and discussing the perspectives we show in this Guide.

<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/14675986.aspeducation> refers you to the Journal of Intercultural Education, and seeks to contribute to a critical analysis of education and the implementation of the Intercultural approach.

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/alliance/context.html> This is a link to a UNESCO project on cultural diversity which teachers can join and look for resources, exchanges, projects and ideas.

A webpage in English designed to help teachers bring global issues into the classroom, with resources, forums and information: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/>

<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/euroconference/participate/fora/cultedres.html>

This page provides a general introduction to the European Union view on cultural diversity in schools. Besides the summary, the web page contains additional links and references on the subject.

<http://www.into.ie/downloads/pdf/professionaldevelopment/interculturalguidelines/ICGtext.pdf>

This link provides intercultural guidelines for schools. It is a resource pack for schools which includes good practice guidelines on the development of inclusive strategies and enriching intercultural policies and practices in schools.

<http://www.ecmi.de/doc/index.html> European Centre for Minority Issues provides information and documents regarding Minorities in Europe. It is divided into three areas: action, research and documentation.

Further documents and papers in English on the matter of diversity can be found at the following database: <http://www.ingenta.com/>,

in Portuguese there are publications available at:

<http://www.ced.ufsc.br/nucleos/mover/index.html>,

and in Italian: <http://www.comune.torino.it/cultura/intercultural/index2.html>

### Books/articles

**Samuel**, Barbara and **Craig**, Cheryl. *Multiculturalism in Canada*. Calgary (Canada): Weigl. 1997. This work is a good example of how to present a diverse picture of a nation and its History. The books has been written for children, so it contains colourful and simple presentations, always showing different (and even contradictory) perspectives to provide the reader with different materials to choose and discuss. This could be a good example to follow on how to present the image of a country and its history.

**Kindersley**, B. y A. **Kindersley**. *Children Like Me*. UNICEF. Madrid: Bruño. 1995; and **Kindersley**, B. y A. **Kindersley**. *Celebrations*. UNICEF. Madrid: Bruño. 2000. Books which present different lives of children around the world (in the first one) and their favourite celebrations (in the second one) could be used as a model to follow for a similar project in the classroom, where the children will compile their life experiences. This could be used as a sound alternative to "Intercultural weeks" which rely on very superficial differences.

**La Ligue de l'enseignement**. *Tous des héros, tous différents*. Paris: Editions du Rouergue. An educational tool for children between 6 and 9, which was made during the 2002 anti-racist weeks. It is a good example of didactic resources developed in Primary classrooms with the aim of avoiding racist attitudes, showing all children as being different but at the same time all equally heroes.

*Daddy Day Care* (Steve Carr, 2003). This movie is a comedy which presents an alternative Day Care set up by un-experienced day-carers. The movie contrasts this school with a traditional one in the neighbourhood (where children wear uniforms). The experience starts as a chaos but using consulting techniques in advertising the day-carers set a meeting with children to ask for their expectations and then things start to go smoothly. The movie shows the power of negotiating with pupils and provides a way to set a discussion on this matter and to compare a school which is based on homogeneity with another based on diversity.



## reflective questions and evaluation

At this point the reader will be provided with some activities to think about Education from a diversity perspective.

### 1. A homogeneity trap

We think an excellent way to reflect on what has been learned and to evaluate if you have come to think from a diversity framework instead of a homogeneity one is to honestly think of a student role model and try to describe him/her.

Write it down before you resume reading.

If your mind has just jumped immediately into the task and you still think homogeneity is a desirable trend, albeit in the back of your mind, you have just fallen into the trap!

If you felt reluctant, or surprised to be asked to do this at this point, you have somehow changed your mind and you are thinking now from a diversity perspective. You just have to keep it going!

### 2. Diary in the strict sense of the term

You should write a diary recording experiences in the classroom one day per week over an entire month. The aim of the diary will be to write down reflections on diversity and homogeneity evidenced in classroom relationships. You should pay special attention to commenting on positive and negative consequences of both trends in practice. This can be done alone or together with other teachers interested in the experience. This will provide a mean, and possibly a technique to keep on practising, to interpret their thoughts and feelings about diversity and homogeneity and an excellent way to make reflections

explicit. Here you will find a paper in Portuguese which claims an ethnographic perspective to deal with diversity at school:

<http://www2.uel.br/ccb/psicologia/revista/textov2n16.htm>



## references

**Banks**, James A. ed. *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2001. A reference work which compiles the work done in every aspect of multicultural education upto 2001, specially focused on the U.S. The book has been well structured making it is easy to look for different aspects concerning multicultural education.

**Barth**, Fredrik ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Cultural Differences*. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland press. 1998 [1969]. The introduction of the book provides a classical theoretical frame to analyse ethnicity from within and without the ethnic group. The author states that differences are never prioritised but have always to do with the context of the relationship. The rest of the modules illustrate this theoretical framework.

**Besalu**, Xavier, and Josep M. **Giovanna Campani** eds. *Educación intercultural en Europa. Un enfoque curricular*. Barcelona: Pomares-Corredor Editions A.S. 1998. Approaches to the concept and the praxis of intercultural education in Europe. It contains two parts: The first part dealing with cultural diversity, European identity and interculturalism, the second part dealing with interculturalism, curriculum and education. It provides a conceptual frame and information regarding educational policies, educational practices, intercultural education, human rights, and intercultural curriculum.

**Deegan**, J. "Roots and Wings: Teacher Education for Diversity". Fourth chapter of the book *Mosaic or Melting Pot? Living with Diversity*. Dublin: Irish national Committee, The European Cultural Foundation. 2003. Two alternatives to the treatment of cultural diversity in education. The mosaic in which identities are kept about groups. It looks for the fusion and the formation of social spaces based on the cultural mixture.

**Gillborn**, D. 'Race', *Ethnicity and Education: Teaching and learning in Multi-learning Schools*. London: Unwin Hyman/Routledge. 1990. This book provides an analysis and overview of the experiences of minority ethnic children in UK schools and makes recommendations about how practitioners can raise achievement of risk groups and reflect diversity of all cultures in the curriculum. It is a case-study description of a secondary School, paying particular attention to the effects of teacher expectations and assumptions on pupils learning and attainment.



**Hernández, C. y del Olmo, M.** *Antropología en clase. Una propuesta didáctica para una sociedad multicultural*. Madrid: Síntesis. 2004. This book provides teachers with ideas and materials to use in classrooms from a diversity perspective.

**Kohn, Alfie.** *The Schools our Children Deserve. Moving beyond Traditional Classrooms and <tough standards>*. New York: New York Time Book Reviews. 1999. The author presents a critical discussion about the principles which regulate present education in the U.S., arguing against some premises (above all the one which teaches to passive students in homogeneous classrooms). He proposes to understand schools as co-operative enterprises whose procedures should pay attention to students' points of view. At the end of the book he includes some tables to test educational practices, separating into two columns the good practices (associated with diversity) and the bad ones (associated with a homogeneous model).

**Lluich Balaguer, Xavier y Jesús Salinas** "La diversidad cultural en la práctica educativa. Materiales para la formación del profesorado en educación intercultural" En: *Criterios de adaptación curricular. Educación compensatoria*. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación Cultura y Deportes. 1996. This chapter starts from the idea of assuming that cultural diversity represents a pedagogic variable of capital importance and the debate on multiculturalism is not to be left aside. It is structured in three parts: theoretical frame, activities and resources. It is most interesting when applied to training and/or educational planning. The text is offered as a material to help centres and teachers to develop global and specific actions to cover the whole student community. It is aimed at teachers in all levels from nursery school to Secondary education. It could be used individually, but the work is designed to be applied to groups to generate dialogue. It is focused on cultural diversity and intercultural curriculum at the school.

**Ouellet, Fernand.** *Les défis du pluralism en éducation. Essais sur la formation interculturelle*. Paris: L'Harmattan. 2002. There are two ways of approaching situations of cultural diversity in schools: by intercultural education and the privilege of openness to diversity; and by citizenship education emphasising social cohesion without losing sight of the egalitarian. It allows reflection on the principles and consequences of two capital questions about the European solution: citizenship and inter-culturalism. It is interesting to review both principles.

**Red Acoge, Andalucía Acoge. Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales.** *La gestión de la multiculturalidad en la escuela*. Málaga: Red Acoge. Andalucía Acoge. 2002. This formation portfolio is a product of the interchange of experiences of Socrates-Comenius projects between the Centre Bruxellos d'Action Interculturelles (CBAI), the Service Développement et d'Evaluation de Programme (SEDEP), the Lieja University, the IRSSAE the Toscana in Italy and the Spanish associations Almería Acoge, Málaga Acoge and Sevilla Acoge. It gathers project experiences about intercultural education carried out in Europe between 1995 and 1998.

**Suarez-Orozco, Carola y Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco:** *Children of Immigration*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. 2002. This is an interesting book to introduce teachers to the experiences of immigrant children. It is based on the U.S. current situation, but it could be useful in any immigrant country.

**Takaki, R.** *A Larger Memory. A History of Our Diversity, with Voices.* Boston: Little Brown & Co. 1998. This book tries to enlarge the memory of the past in the U.S. including the experiences of different groups who also build the nation but which were left out of the Historical memory.

**Watson, C.W.** *Multiculturalism.* Buckingham/Philadelphia: Open University Press. 2000. This is a good book to read in order to easily and clearly understand what multiculturalism is about. It focuses into two tendencies, "soft multiculturalism" and "critic multiculturalism", as two different tendencies, approaches, and ways to deal with diversity.

<http://www.ipv.pt/millennium/sonia11.htm> In Portuguese about antiracist Education

<http://animadores.iespana.es/animadores/edupaz/edupaz05.html>

<http://www.eduso.net/archivos/apuesta.htm> These articles (in Spanish) deal with diversity from Pedagogic Renovation perspectives

You will find many more documents and references on diversity at the following address: <http://www.eduref.org/plweb-cgi/fastweb?search>, just type in the word 'diversity' or making and advanced search.



## school, home, community

The aims of this module are:

- To reflect on the importance of the relations and collaboration among the families, the school and other community agents. From an intercultural approach, why is it important? Why is there a claim for this participation?
- To become aware of the advantages of collaboration. It is necessary to consider the process of learning within the different systems and contexts in which our students develop.
- To consider different alternatives of collaboration and understand them as a continuum.
- To become familiar with several projects and proposals (learning communities, accelerated schools, etc.) which promote this participation.



## to start thinking

### Visiting a Learning Community...

Recently we had the opportunity to visit a school in Tarrasa (Barcelona, Spain), the Public School "Mare de Deu de Montserrat". This school is a learning community. When we went there the only idea we had on this matter was that people involved in learning communities try to favour participation and collaboration of the parents and the community. What we never could have imagined is that participation could reach the heights that it achieves.

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What do you think we found at the centre?

Or to put it another way, what types of relationships usually happen at schools (among school and family and community)?

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### ... arranging the visit ...

Several days before going to this school we made a final telephone call. As it was our purpose to carry out some video recordings, we wanted to confirm if there were classes on Monday evening, the first day of the visit. The answer we got, in a surprised tone, was the following one: "do you mean if we have interactive groups?". We did not have a clear idea what the person was talking about and our surprise was even greater.

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What do you think was hidden behind that answer?

What do you think may happen in a school where, when they are asked if that day there were classes, they answer in such a way?

What kind of work models do you think happen in that centre?

And, what kind of models are you used to?

How do you usually work at your school?

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### ... we had a great surprise!

On entering the school we experienced a stimulating environment. The walls were decorated with posters (a few days before they had celebrated an open doors week); the place was colourful, and very welcoming. The same day we had the opportunity to discover what it was that they termed interactive groups; the classroom door opened and there they were...

What do you think was going on within the classroom? We will not make you suffer any longer; there were five adults, working with a group of between 25 to 30 students. They were seated in groups of five or six students, each one attended by an adult.

How could it be possible for a centre to have five teachers in a class? When we related the experience to other colleagues they all asked if it was a private centre (one usually assumes that these initiatives are only possible at great financial cost and investment). This was not the case. It was a public centre, in a district with some socio-economical difficulties. The fact of the matter was that not all of them were teachers: in addition to the tutor of the group (the only teacher), there were a social mediator hired by the Education Council, two voluntary mothers, and two volunteers from the district. When have you seen more than one teacher in class? How to apply this model?

(Watch the videoclip dedicated to "Learning communities")

(See modules 7- School structure and organization, and 8 –Teaching and Learning strategies)



## information

As we are discovering, one of the basic objectives we have established for this module is to promote the participation between the school and the community. The idea of the *learning communities* (see glossary) would become our final goal. Conscious of the difficulties to implement a project like this (e.g. it requires the implication and coordination of all the teaching staff), we will mainly offer some alternatives of intervention that may favour this collaboration and which, to some extent, can adjust to the intervention boundaries we may have.

At its optimum, a school is seen as an educator of a family in a society, whereas a community should provide assistance and be a cooperative partner with a school. For example, often the initiative to preserve a language of the community comes from the community itself. The family is a part of a community and simultaneously a continuator of the intercultural education approach begun at school. Thus we can say that in an ideal situation the school, home and community should be mutually integrated systems.

The role of involvement of the student's family culture in the curriculum of the school is important. If the school neglects the student's language and culture, then the student's motivation to learn is confused. If there is a positive and open attitude towards cultural diversity in the school, then the student is encouraged to learn. It is a fact that students' school results are better in schools when the intercultural approach is an objective.

(See module 1- Compulsory education: importance of intercultural education)

Why is it important to have collaboration and participation?

**Activity 1**

Before raising some arguments that justify the need to favour the collaboration, we will ask you, along with others in your group, to develop some of the reasons that make it necessary.

Why do you think that there is such a big claim from the intercultural approach? What advantages do you think it has? What are the difficulties that can be experienced when collaboration and participation of the family or other members of the community take place?

Below we will set out some of the reasons that usually promote collaboration and participation of the family in the processes of teaching and learning (check them with the previous ones you have highlighted) and in the dynamics of the centre. Some of the advantages or benefits that can be observed are:

(Henderson and Berla, 1994)

(go to: [www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa1k37.htm](http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa1k37.htm))

**Student benefits:**

Higher grades and tests scores  
Better attendance and more homework done  
Fewer placements in special education  
More positives attitudes and behaviour  
Higher graduation rates  
Greater enrolment in postsecondary education

**School benefits:**

Improved teacher morale  
Higher ratings of teachers by parents  
More support from families  
Higher student achievement  
Better reputations in the community

**Parent benefits:**

More confidence in the school  
Teachers have higher opinions of them as parents and higher expectations of their children  
Parents develop more confidence about helping their children learn at home and about themselves as parents  
Parents often enrol in continuing education to advance their own schooling

Collaboration can be done in different ways and grades:

“One component of a school learning community is an organized programme of school, family, and community partnerships with activities linked to school goals. Research and fieldwork show that such programmes improve schools, strengthen families, invigorate community support, and increase student achievement and success.”

(Epstein, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Sheldon, 2003)

([www.ascd.org/publications/ed\\_lead/200405/epstein.html](http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed_lead/200405/epstein.html))

Collaboration and participation from the family and community may happen at different moments, for different activities and in different degrees. We will now point out some of the alternatives that can be offered, following Epstein's model of six types of family and community involvement (Epstein et al., 2004): parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. As partnerships, two-way communication and collaboration is promoted, and advice both for parents/communities and schools is given on how to promote involvement. Let's see what they mean and develop some specific examples of these types of involvement:

## Activity 2

As previously, we suggest, if you have the option, to think as a group.

Read the description of each type of relationships that can occur and put them in order taking care of the degree of participation/implication. Try to find the differing degrees of involvement of the families in the education of their children and young people. Think of practical examples for each type of involvement, taking into account cultural diversity, e.g. involvement of diverse families.

### A) Parenting

- Assist families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level.
- Assist schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children

(e.g.: Training at a “School of parents”: Some centres have one where topics of interest for the families are dealt with: TV, adolescence, toys,...).

### B) Communicating

- Communicate with families about school programmes and student progress.
- Create two-way communication channels between school and home.

(e.g.: Attending meetings with teachers and other parents, interviews with tutors,...)

Firstly, we will consider the **informal relationship** between schools and families:

Every morning, when parents take their children to school, they have the opportunity to have a minimum opportunity to make contact with teachers. In these instances they use the opportunity to comment about specific aspects of children's behaviour, teachers make suggestions about it, parents talk about their doubts, ask for information ...

After interviewing some parents, we have seen that these contacts are decreasing. On many occasions parents are not allowed to enter in the school playground, they must leave their children at the school entrance; ... the frontier between school and street is more and more marked.

A teacher in one of these schools felt under some pressure from her colleagues when she broke this barrier and let parents enter the classroom, commenting on different topics with them ...

What do you think you could use these contacts for? Why do you think schools keep a distance with families?

**Why did the teachers feel the way they did when someone broke the barriers?**

Besides sporadic contacts, schools use other strategies in a more **formal relationship** between schools and families. The first one is mail in order to give information to parents, to get permission for children to do a specific activity (e.g. go out from school); another alternative is to use the notice board.

#### **School Inner Rule System...**

"Information of general interest: official norms, recommendations on hygiene, cultural activities and other issues that may affect you (1), will be made through the centre notice boards, and if it is possible, by means of individual informative notes that will be given to the pupils "

(extract of a real School Inner Rule System)

**What do you think the information notes would be useful for?**

**What would you use them for?**

**What other strategies do you think are used when parents do not speak school language? What could be done in this instance?**

Another strategy is the "tutoring", which uses to be a fixed day at a fixed time. Parents can attend these meetings on their own initiative. Frequently it is teachers who ask parents to attend this meeting, which are often, are individual, though sometimes they meet a group of parents. When a school requests parents to have an individual interview, it is rarely because the child is succeeding; it is usually because the child has a problem of behaviour or achievement.



### ... School Inner Rule System...

"There are two levels of communication between teachers and parents:

- Level of classroom group, three meetings will be held during the course with parents from each tutor group; these meetings will be called by the teachers or the tutor, during the evening from 16:30 hours in order to make attendance possible for the majority of parents.
  1. The first meeting will be held during the first month of the course, to give information on the operating norms and parents will be given a document with the objectives to be achieved in the different areas, their contents, the evaluation criteria and the minimum level of assessment required to obtain a positive outcome.
  2. The second meeting will be held in the second trimester of the course and the "Grade Equipment" (group of teachers in charge of an specific grade) will decide the groups and subjects to deal with, depending on the circumstances at that grade.
  3. The third meeting will take place at the end of the course by tutor groups, dealing with the extent to which the objectives have been achieved, gathering suggestions to improve the educational development for the next course.
  4. In addition, it will possible to call other meetings whenever specific problems of the classroom.
- At individual level, by means of interviews with the parents of each student, at least one during the course, in which parents will be informed on the progress of learning of their children. At the end of the course, several individual interviews will also take place to comment on the results of the evaluation. These interviews will take place on Wednesday afternoons from 12:30 to 13:30 hours."

(Extract from a real School Inner System about communication with parents)

### Activity 3

Read and analyse the different alternatives proposed in the text. What do you think about them?

Again the key is on flexibility. Nowadays, parents' timetable and availability is quite limited and often they are unable to attend at the times proposed by schools. How difficult would it be to adapt the meetings to a time suitable to parents? What do you think happens? Why do teachers have difficulties in changing timetables?

Why do you think that is it so difficult for teachers to give positive information about children? When parents are asked to go to school they probably think it is because their children have a problem. How would they feel and react if it wasn't like that?

You can interview teachers and parents to gain their impressions regarding this.

### C) Volunteering

- Improve recruitment, training, activities, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations.
- Enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school.

(e.g.: Parents going to their children's school to volunteering at the classroom)

(See the videoclip: learning communities).

In Spain, during the first weeks of kindergarten, parents stay in the classroom with their children in order that the children adapt better to this new environment. This cannot be considered as volunteering (because it is compulsory), but we highlight it because it usually is the only time in their children's whole schooling when parents enter in the classroom. Could the philosophy of this strong link between family and school in kindergarten be extended to the whole school process?

Some examples of volunteers in the classroom are:

*Haggety School and kindergarten* in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, had interest and developed several opportunities to involve parents, such as:

- Parents were invited to speak to the whole class about their backgrounds, professions, etc.
- Parents from different countries were asked to record books in their own language for the library of the school.

Many schools in the USA conduct reading-partner programmes periodically (weekly, monthly) with a variety of volunteers, including parents, senior citizens, and community groups. Others hold special reading events. For example, *Dr. Lydia T. Wright School* in Buffalo, New York, ran a reading marathon for 26 days to focus the entire community on reading. This event involved parents, grandparents, and others in the community—e.g. police officers, firefighters, local authors of books for children, the mayor, judges, local celebrities, and older students—in reading activities. (Epstein & Salinas, 2004).

### Activity 4

**Find or create more examples of parents volunteering in the class. What are the benefits? For parents, students, teachers...?**

### D) Learning at Home

- Involve families with their children in academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities.
- Encourage teachers to design homework that enables students to share and discuss interesting tasks.

(e.g.: helping with homework, encouraging children to read, and promoting school attendance. From the school usually parents are asked to support their children in the study, creating good conditions for work, helping them with the school tasks, promoting reading, supervising TV programmes they see...)

### ***E) Decision Making***

Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through school councils or improvement teams, committees, and parent organizations.

(e.g.: Participation in the management of the centre through the School Council. There are a limited number of representatives of the families, chosen by students' parents. Participation in parents associations, including associations of parents of gifted children, parents of children with special educational needs -autism, handicaps...- ).

Let's see how this type of involvement occurs through three examples:

#### England:

All state maintained schools in both the primary and secondary sectors have **Parent – Teacher Associations (PTA's)**. Their tasks are to organize social activities and fund raising events for pupils, parents and teachers.

Every school has at least one parent and teacher representative on the **Governing Body** of the school. This body is ultimately responsible for everything to do with the school from the buildings to school policy to employment of staff etc. Prior to new pupils joining a school various visits can be arranged in the form of open days and individual visits for parents and their children.

#### Latvia:

**Parent associations** are a standard component of school life. In each school there is a so-called **School's Council** that consists of schools' administrations, pupils and parents representatives. It is relatively newly developed institution, before there were **committees of parents** – a societal establishment in which parents elected their representatives for the dialogue with school administration. The parents' committees still function in many places today, sometimes parallel to the school's council. The curricula of the school is not the concern of the school's councils of parents' committees. In cases of intolerable behaviour or inadequate operation of a teacher, if it occurred, it would be noticed.

#### Spain:

The **AMPAS (Association of mothers and fathers**, former APAS, Association of parents) are the association of all parents of pupils from each school (compulsory education). These associations have rules to do their work: they have elections to select the president, secretary, economics, and other persons that together do the work of the association. The work in school goes from preparing extra-curricular activities, after school, each week; collaborating with teachers in visits from school (with pupil organization, transportation, funding to pay the visit, helping teacher if the pupils are very young, etc.), if there is lunch at school some parents must control the meals (menus, variety and quality).

Some of the parents are selected to participate at the "Consejo Escolar" (**School Board**). The Consejo Escolar is where certain activities of schools must be approved,

such as the economic program for each year; the goals of education, the deadline, the disciplinary of pupils when some pupils don't agree the norms, the pedagogical line, etc.

## Activity 5

As you can see, these three countries have similar organizations to involve parents in decision-making. Find out what is the case in your country/region:

- Which organizations are there?
- How do they work?
- What are their goals?
- Do parents from diverse cultural backgrounds participate equally? If not, why?
- How can schools promote participation in the decision-making?

Think about these questions and ask your colleagues about it.

### F) Collaborating with the Community

Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups to including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities. Enable all to contribute service to the community.

The opening of the school to the **community** can be accomplished from the centre itself if it gets out to meet the community, as well as from the community that enters the school. It is important to develop the students' sense of community and enable them to contribute to it. Some examples of collaboration with the community could be:

- To visit organizations and institutions in the community (educative city council, other educational institutions, companies, cultural associations, libraries...)
- To count on the community within the centre: implication of volunteers in educational and social mediating tasks, translators, to offer spaces in the centre for associations (cultural, of parents, sports, training (e.g. music school),), immigrant associations,...
- To have a common project, e.g. environmental education promoted by local government and also included in the school programme.

Let us look at two examples of school and community links:

#### Czech Republic: Nova skola

One of the aims in *Nova school* is developing capacity at schools. The network includes ten schools in Prague (six actively participating schools and four observer schools). The programme has not only enabled schools to exchange experiences, but it has assisted them to assess needs, create materials, identify potential sponsors, create links to the local community, fundraise, develop communication techniques internally and externally

and take the first steps of establishing themselves as centres of community development.

*What is a community school?*

A community school offers not only the standard level of education, but is a facility that is open beyond the traditional school day for the purpose of providing academic, recreation, health, social service and work-preparation programmes for people of all ages. Community education has three basic components:

- Lifelong Learning: Implementing the principle that learning continues throughout life.
- Providing formal and informal learning opportunities.
- Offering programmes and services for all community members, often in an intergenerational setting.

Community Involvement works in:

- Promoting a sense of civic responsibility.
- Providing leadership opportunities for community members.
- Including diverse populations in all aspects of community life.
- Encouraging democratic procedures in local decision-making.
- Efficient use of resources.
- Using the schools and the community's physical, financial, and human resources to address the community's needs.
- Reducing duplication of services by promoting collaborative effort.

Latvia: community involvement in rural settings

The school's connection with community is stronger in small villages, where the school is also sometimes a local societal centre – there are organized all cultural meetings, entertainment events, is founded the local library. Everyone knows each other and all activities are spread out before you. The events in the school are also events for the village. The integration in the rural environment is faster than in urban because the contacts among people are not as impersonal as in the city. Here also, the influence of a society on the learning process is indirect: the society with its attitude shows its values.

**G) Cultural diversity and family involvement**

Parents' expectations in relation to their children and the school are very important, since they determine the type of support that families will offer to their children. Parents can understand the school as a place where to leave the children (parking); a place to acquire useful knowledge for the labour market, a place of integral education, or a platform for social mobility (Samper, p. 81).

Let us think about expectations:

- **What do you think families expect from schools? And from their children? Ask some parents and try to understand how their expectations influence their relationship with schools.**
- **What expectations do teachers have towards their students' families? Do they imply a great deal of communication or collaboration between them? Think about it.**
- **Do these parents' and teachers' expectations differ when considering diverse cultural groups? In which sense? What are the consequences for students?**

Research (e.g., Comer & Haynes, 1992; Epstein & Dauber, 1993) suggests a connection between the school climate and the extent to which parents and families are involved in their children's education. (See module 7- school organization)

[www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa300.htm](http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa300.htm)

**Minority group parents often do not participate in school activities.**

**Why do you think this happens? What are the possible causes?**

**Read the following information about it.**

(See module 7 about structure and organization, as well)

Comer (1986) emphasizes that this lack of involvement should not be interpreted as disinterest in their children's education. Rather, these parents don't participate because they don't feel comfortable in schools. Comer's work with schools USA shows that parents' prior experiences with schools, their lack of knowledge about school policies and procedures, their feelings of intimidation toward educators, and their perception of not being welcome contribute to non-involvement in their children's schools.

[www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa3lk5.htm](http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/famncomm/pa3lk5.htm)

"Researches conclude that families, regarding their socio-professional origin, adopt different ways of relation with schools. Families with a medium-high level have comfortable relationships with school, they are in accordance with school, projects, and if they have problems they have also the resources to influence in the school context. Families of a low level are in an inferiority situation with school: they have less information, they know less channels of communication with schools, and their self esteem about the possibility of influencing in school context is low. These families are interested in schools and teachers' work, but they don't feel capable of giving relevant things for their children education, and therefore they don't attend the meetings".

(Vila, p. 108).

## Some projects and experiences that promote collaboration and participation

### a) Learning communities

In "learning communities" community participation is the main characteristic. This experience is based on the coordinated action of all agents in the classroom: teachers (main responsible), parents, and volunteers. Everyone who can teach and learn and improve learning will be in the classroom, each one sharing to his/her knowledge, world vision, and culture.

([www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net](http://www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net)) (See Glossary)

Other innovative educational programmes involve families and communities as an important part of them, as well:

### b) Success for All

One of the principles of "Success for All", is "a family support programme engaging parents, community members, and integrated services"

([www.successforall.net](http://www.successforall.net))

Parent Involvement is a key component for student success.

### c) School Development Programme

Parent involvement is a key element of the "School Development Programme". The Programme recognizes the critical role parents can and should play in their children's education.

([www.info.med.yale.edu/comer/about/parent.html](http://www.info.med.yale.edu/comer/about/parent.html))

### d) "Accelerated Schools"

They adhere to three inter-related principles:

**Unity of Purpose:** all members of the school community share a dream for the school and work together toward a common set of goals that will benefit all students;

**Empowerment Coupled with Responsibility:** every member of the school community is empowered to participate in a shared decision-making process, to share in the responsibility for implementing these decisions, and to be held accountable for the outcomes of these decisions;

**Building on Strengths:** in creating their dream school, accelerated school communities recognize and utilize the knowledge, talents, and resources of every member of the school community.

([www.acceleratedschools.net](http://www.acceleratedschools.net))



## activities and suggestions

### Activity 7

**In an investigation carried out by the INCE in 1998 on family and school in secondary education in Spain, the following data was obtained:**

- Participation of parents in school activities is low: a percentage in excess of 80% shows little or no participation in extra-school activities and also in cultural activities in or out of school schedule. The greater participation takes place in meetings of great interest for the centre (51% of parents usually involve themselves often or frequently).
- In 82% of the centres there is an AMPA (Association of Mothers and Parents of Students). Half of parents participate by means of payment of the quota, and 14% are active members.
- Another way of participation, the only one with respect to management and decision making at the educative centre, is the School Council. 42% of parents do not know the function of this organ for representation, though 65% are very satisfied or satisfied.
- The way of communication most frequently used by families to get in contact with the centre is the meeting with the tutor (81%), followed by the information through letters (66%), the meetings with parents of students of a group-class (55%), and the meetings summoned by the AMPA (54%).

This study concludes,

"the concern of parents is centred on the direct reality of their children, and more specifically trying to avoid their problems at the centre. Parents concerned for the management of the centre or the educational plans are a minority. Parents, in general, don't feel like being responsible for that aspect of work and it is a widespread attitude, with few differences among social groups "and that the relation parents-centre is mainly based on interviews "(p. 70).

In the light of these data,

- **How do you interpret them?**
- **Do you think the results would have been different in primary education? Why?**
- **What happens in you local or national context?**
- **Why do parents not participate more often?**



- **What can the school do to improve this situation and involve families in the school?**

## Activity 8

### Case study: Research about Pakistani parents and home-school cooperation in Norway

In the Norwegian school system, participation and cooperation between school and home is a highly valued ideal. The Norwegian Act relating to Primary and Secondary Education (*Opplæringslova*) establishes the formal role of parents in the school administration with parents' representatives being part of the school boards. At the individual level, the Norwegian Education Act specifies cooperation between school and home as one of the intrinsic goals of education.

The aim of a research project is to investigate the cooperation between parents with a Pakistani background and Norwegian primary school. Starting from the parents' and the schools' own experience the project attempts to identify facilitating factors as well as barriers to integration and participation through parental involvement in legal settings.

One hypothesis governing the project is that the schools expect parents to support and follow-up the schools' work and to see cooperation from the same point of view as the schools (Seeberg 2003). According to Nordahl and Skilbrei (2002) the home-school relationship suffers from an overflow of information and scarce dialogue and cooperative decision-making between the parts. This means that it may be difficult for parents to be critical, articulate divergent opinions and to influence the system in any substantial way. When parents are expected to be involved in accordance to informal, tacit (Norwegian) rules, this may make it even more difficult for Pakistani parents than for Norwegian parents. Do Pakistani parents expect to be involved in cooperative decision-making, and how do they experience home-school cooperation? Theoretical based on citizenship and parental autonomy. Parents and family are seen as a pre-political institution whose integrity cannot be legitimately violated by the state (Levinson 1999). This implies a distinction between private and public spheres. This may be important not only for the cooperation between Pakistani parents and the Norwegian primary school, but also for our conception of a multicultural society, democracy and cooperation between home and school in general.

(See also module 5: educational policies)

Answer the following questions, bearing in mind what was said on "cultural diversity and family involvement" in the information section:

- **How are legal rights put into practice? Are Pakistani parents included or excluded?**
- **Do parents experience these legal rights as instruments for their own involvement and interests?**
- **How do Pakistani parents conceive and experience their own possibilities to influence the school system and the education of their own children?**

- **How are expectations from parents and schools influencing Pakistani family involvement?**
- **How can cultural diversity be taken into account to promote family involvement?**

### Activity 9

Select one of the innovative experiences shown in 'Information' (success for all, SDP, learning communities, accelerated schools), and obtain more information related to collaboration school-family-community. Summarize the information you have got relating it to the context of the programme/experience, and answer the following questions:

- **What has caught your attention? Why?**
- **How can that experience be transferred to the educational context you know?**
- **In what sense does the programme/experience promote attention to cultural diversity?**

### Activity 10

Read the following text and answer the questions below:

"Educational innovation in the field of school-family relations needs a kind of attitudes from professionals of teaching, who need to accept that their educational knowledge can't be far or upon the educational knowledge of families. Only when relations based on equality and mutual confidence are established, families and school will share the same educational project"

(Vila, p. 110).

- **How important is it to build partnerships between schools and families? Why?**

Read in the "Information Section" the part, which deals with "Cultural diversity and family involvement". **What would you say about it?**



## proposals for collaboration

### PROPOSAL 1

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Interview parents and professors/teachers from the same centre about the relation family-school. Prepare a script from these questions:

- **What do families and schools expect from each other?**
- **How is the relationship between the family and the school? What type of collaboration happens?**
- **What difficulties do exist in terms of communication, schedules, availability, and generated climate of confidence...?**
- **How to improve the relationship and collaboration?**
- **What are the benefits of family-school collaboration? Who benefits from it?**

Analyse the answers given by both: do they agree? If so, in what sense? Do they differ? If so, in what sense?

Establish a means to improve collaboration between families and school in that centre. The chosen measures should be adapted to that context.

### PROPOSAL 2

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Visit the parents association of a school. What kind of activities do they do? Do they have their own space in the school? To what extent do families participate? Are there differences between families from diverse cultural groups? What can school offer to this association? How can they work together? Summarize the information you have got, evaluate the activities of this parents association and think about how it could be improved, especially about increasing the participation and involvement of diverse groups' families.

### PROPOSAL 3

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Research at least 10 community associations, institutions, etc. with which the schools in your local area could develop partnerships. Create a directory of associations with the following information:

- Name, address, contact information (person, phone number, email)
- Description of the association: goals, structure...

- Interest for schools: does the association have an educational programme or section? Which educational objectives or subjects could it support? Does it have experience in partnering? ...
- Any other information you consider important

Working in pairs or small groups, focus on one of them and develop a collaborative plan between your school and that community institution.



## planning and adapting curriculum

Review the communication strategy with families of a school: meetings calendar, attention to parents timetable, topics they talk about, requested and given information, ... Which document reflects this information (educational project, prospectus of the school)? How is communication with parents promoted by the school? You have some examples below.

a) An example from *Montserrat school* (Spain), which belongs to an NGO but is sponsored by the government, shows the family-school relations. They are:

- Two regular meetings, one at the beginning of each school year and one at the end. The tutor of the class addresses parents (usually just mothers) and tells them about the particular objectives for each school year or if they were reached or not at the end of the year. They tell to parents also about how the group of kids is socially behaving (what kind of relationships they establish and hold). If there is any problem in the pupil behaviour or academic performance, they ask parents for a personal appointment. They try to do it with all parents but do not have enough time. Parents know that if their children are not attending classes, they will get a note on it. We also get letters from the school regarding whatever we should pay or whatever extraordinary thing or event is going to happen, about school holidays, parties, etc.
- Pupils also keep a diary (in which they write whatever they want), which has a section to send back and forth comments between teachers and parents
- Parents can share information, impressions, etc. if their children are involved in extracurricular activities.

b) One way to communicate with parents is by the help of a school's weekly newspaper. The structure of the newspaper could be the following:

- News about school's strategy or development.
- News from each class about what was the most important item in the week; some interesting out-of-class activities could be included, for example, study visits, excursions, etc.
- News from parents and community: parents association's news, decisions taken in the government bodies, etc.



## specific resources and additional links

### Websites

Family & Community

[www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/pa0cont.htm](http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/pa0cont.htm)

### Books/articles

**Banks, Cherry A. McGee.** (2004). Communities, families and educators working for school improvement, in James Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (eds.) *Multicultural education: issues and perspectives*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

**Comer, J.** (1986). Parent participation in the schools. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 67, 442-446.

**Comer, J.P., & Haynes, N.M.** (1992, June). *Summary of school development programme effects*. New Haven, CT: Yale Child Study Centre.

**Dauber, S.L., & Epstein, J.L.** (1993). Parents' attitudes and practices of involvement in inner city elementary and middle schools. In N.F. Chavkin (Ed.), *Families and schools in a pluralistic society* (pp. 53-71). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

**Epstein, Joyce L. and Salinas, Karen Clark.** (2004) Partnering with Families and Communities, in *Educational Leadership* vol. 61, n. 8. Schools as Learning Communities, Pages 12-18. [www.ascd.org/publications/ed\\_lead/200405/epstein.html](http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed_lead/200405/epstein.html)

**Henderson, A., & Berla, N.** (Eds.). (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education, Centre for Law and Education.

**INCE.** (1998). *Familia y escuela. Diagnóstico del Sistema Educativo*. 1997. Madrid: Instituto Nacional de Calidad y Evaluación-MEC.

**Levinson, Meira** (1999): *The Demands of Liberal Education*. Oxford University Press, Oxford

**Nordahl, T. og Skilbrei, M.:** Det vanskelige samarbeidet. NOVA Rapport 13/02, Oslo

**Samper Rasero, Lluís** (ed.). (2000). *Familia, cultura y educación*. Lleida: Universitat de Lleida.

**Seeberg, Marie Louise** (2003): *Two classrooms, two countries*. NOVA Rapport 18/03, Oslo

**Vila, Ignasi.** (1998). *Familia, escuela y comunidad*. Barcelona: ICE Universitat de Barcelona-Horsori.



## theoretical assumptions

**The aims of this module are:**

- To identify the theories implicit / explicit in teachers' practice
- To show theories underlying the intercultural approach (teaching / learning communication)
- To reflect on the practical implications of the above

In this module we will reflect upon, and try to answer the following questions:

1. As collateral but essential information to the module:

- **What does theory mean?**
- **What does it imply?**

2. As specific to teaching and learning theoretical assumptions:

- **What does learning mean?**
- **What do we learn for?**
- **How is it achieved?**
- **How do we learn?**
- **What does teaching mean?**

What to teach? How can it be done appropriately?

How to teach?



## to start thinking

Read the following quotations, trying to relate what they say to your own experience as a learner and as a teacher:

“Where I grew up, learning was a collective activity. But when I got to school and tried to share learning with other students, that was called cheating. The curriculum sent the clear message to me that learning was a highly individualistic, almost secretive, endeavour. My working class experience . . . was disparaged”.

**Henry A Giroux**

“Intellectuals who memorize everything, reading for hours on end, slaves to the text, fearful of taking a risk, speaking as if they were reciting from memory, fail to make any concrete connections between what they have read and what is happening in the world, the country, or the local community. They repeat what has been read with precision but rarely teach anything of personal value. They speak correctly about dialectical thought but think mechanistically. Such teachers inhabit an idealized world, a world of mere data, disconnected from the one most people inhabit.”

**Paolo Freire, Pedagogy of Freedom**

Giroux and Freire’s quotations reflect about learning and teaching, respectively.

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**What do you think about these concepts?**

**What does theory mean? What does it imply?**

**What does learning mean? What do we learn for? How is it achieved? How do we learn?**

**What does teaching mean? What to teach? How can it be done appropriately? How to teach?**

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Write down your answer. Your explanations, your statements about teaching and learning show your theory about them. Theory is both the concepts and the relations we use to explain an event, a behaviour; to describe and explain the reality. Theory is the explanation we have to understand the world and people’s relationships (with other people, with things, with environment).

When we establish relations with other people, they are modulated by our own theory and beliefs about them. All teachers have their own theory to explain the learning of their students and their own theories about what teaching implies. We always have our own theories, although they are not usually explicit. Let us think about them...



information

### Educational theory

Theory, in a basic sense, marks the distinction between the observation of the particular on the one hand, and the attempt to formulate general observations and, ultimately, to construct explanatory systems on the other. Theory depicts relationships between concepts and explanations for the events observed or experienced. Theory cannot be divorced entirely from practical observation: every particular observation is theory laden, if only in that one chooses to classify it in one way rather than another. Theory may be productive even when partially mistaken. By this we mean that despite our errors and deficiencies to propose an explanation to events which may serve several practical purposes. As **Freire** (1998) quoted:

Critical reflection on practice is a requirement of the relationship between theory and practice. Otherwise theory becomes simply "blah, blah, blah," and practice, pure activism. ... To teach is not to transfer knowledge but to create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge... There is, in fact, no teaching without learning.

Educational theory is very old, it was already better developed than a number of other branches of theory by the time of Plato. The question is whether it has changed very much since that time. It is arguable that in broad terms development in educational theory has been similar in kind to and kept pace with, development in, for example, moral theory and political theory over the centuries. That is, particular concepts have been more fully explained, arguments have been tested and stood their ground or found wanting, new circumstances or new insights have given rise to new forms of problems, and a fuller and wider body of understanding has accumulated. But it does not mean that we have necessarily established with more certainty what we ought to do morally, politically or educationally.



Educational theory is not comparable to the theories in the natural sciences. Three main differences in educational theory are: a) its ends are far from clearly articulated, and to a certain extent, hotly and legitimately debated (education itself; creativity; socialisation, etc.); b) It has no specific methodology, since it involves a combination of various different types of techniques and methods, each requiring examination in a different kind of way (evaluative questions, conceptual questions, empirical questions, etc.); c) its central concepts are not clearly articulated (education itself; culture; teaching and learning). As Dewey (1963) stated in relation to the *New Education* movement:

“It is not too much to say that an educational philosophy which professes to be based on the idea of freedom may become as dogmatic as ever was the traditional education which it reacted against. For any theory and set of practices is dogmatic which is not based upon critical examination of its own underlying principles. Let us say that the new education emphasizes the freedom of the learner. Very well. A problem is now set. What does freedom mean and what are the conditions under which it is capable of realization?”

(Dewey, 1963:22)

Bearing in mind these limitations and considerations, we propose to think about the *theoretical assumptions underlying intercultural education*. To do this, we must address the issues of *which are the key concepts* to consider when we think about education and *which are the theories* (explanations) about teaching and learning that justify the intercultural education proposals. The main concepts we should consider in education (culture, cultural diversity, among others) are discussed in the **Glossary**. This **Module** will present our *assumptions* about teaching and learning processes.

Many theories have been developed to explain how teaching and learning takes place; however, they usually consider the teacher an expert whose main role is to transmit knowledge, with the learner in a passive role. The need to place a more active role on the learner was claimed by Piaget (although from an individualistic point of view), and others such as Montessori, Freinet, Vygotsky, Bruner, Dewey, or Freire, who started placing the emphasis on experiential learning, and giving importance to the social context in which the individual develops. The role of the teacher is seen more as that of a mediator, a facilitator. These ideas, however, have not permeated current teaching practices, save for few exceptions.

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's, a number of educational theorists and practitioners, coming from many different disciplines (Pedagogy, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Science – e.g. Apple, Aronowitz, Darder, Giroux, McLaren, ...), began to explore the relationship between culture and power, specifically as it translates into the everyday life of pedagogical theory and practice, challenging traditional educational theory and practice, and giving way to the critical pedagogy movement.

We will not present here a set of theories or conceptual elaborations for you to study, but will rather focus on those issues which are significant for the intercultural approach underlying this Guide, drawing on some of the former authors' ideas. Because of its relevance to the topic, we will further consider the critical pedagogy assumptions.

**Think about the relationship between theory and practice:**

Do you agree with Freire's quotation? Which is the relevance of theory in your daily work? Are you aware of your educational ideas?

Which educational theories are you aware of? Do you think they are at the core of intercultural education? What kind of topics should a theory emphasise to be considered "intercultural"?

Re-read Dewey's statement. What do you think Dewey meant? How does this statement relate to the importance of defining the day concepts we want to consider? What implications does it have for the development of theory?

**Let us move on to our main assumptions concerning learning and teaching, from an intercultural perspective.*****What does learning mean?***

We consider learning as an active process on the part of the learner, that inevitably occurs within a social context. It is a process that moves people beyond the factors of conditioning themselves as human persons. The capacity to go beyond the factors of conditioning is one of the obvious advantages of the human person (Freire). This is our learning capacity.

Humans capacity to intervene, to compare, to judge, to decide, to choose, to desist, makes them capable of acts of greatness, of dignity, and, at the same time, of the unthinkable in terms of indignity... I like to be human because in my incompleteness I know that I am conditioned. Yet conscious of such conditioning, I know that I can go beyond it, which is the essential difference between conditioned and determined existence.

"[Conscientisation] is natural because incompleteness is integral to the phenomenon of life itself, which besides women and men includes the cherry trees in my garden and the birds that sing in their branches... Education does not make us educable. It is our awareness of being unfinished that makes us educable."

**(Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed)**

Learning is not the result of teaching, but our own achievement. Learning does not take place in a vacuum, it occurs in a specific and dynamic social context. We should take into account the cultural contexts, the cultural meanings. Why? Because these references are part and product of the learning process. We learn in, from, for, toward ... cultural backgrounds. Please refer to the concept of cultural diversity in the **Glossary**.

We learn mostly by experience, think about the times when your parents told you not to do something (or when you give advice to your own children or students), but you did not understand the reasons until you did that thing. Another's persons explanation might

prove very useful to clarify concepts or procedures, but real learning won't occur until there is reasoning and appropriation on the part of the learner.

## Activity 2

### Comment on this quotation, linking it to learning:

*"Nothing is 'culture free,' but neither are individuals simply mirrors of their culture."*  
(Bruner, 1996)

What does the term culture mean to you? What is its influence on learning?

Dewey highlights two main principles of learning: experience and interaction. Experience refers to our personal, intimate, subjective experience and also to the social events and group experiences. Interaction deals with our relations and exchanges with people we identify as equal or diverse, "others than mine" (diversity).

Why not establish an intimate connection between knowledge considered basic to any school curriculum and knowledge that is the fruit of the lived experience of these students as individuals? Curiosity as restless questioning, as movement toward the revelation of something hidden, as a question verbalised or not, as search for clarity, as a moment of attention, suggestion, and vigilance, constitutes an integral part of the phenomenon of being alive (Dewey).

According to Dewey's principles, we consider learning as a collective construction of knowledge that should be linked to the experiences of the students in their respective environments. Thus, learning must be meaningful and significant to the learner and we must promote learning through activities undertaken with others (not only adults or teachers, but also among equals – see peer tutoring in Module 8- Learning strategies).

All of the former ideas conform to what is termed constructivism: a philosophy of learning founded on the premise that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in. Each of us generates our own "rules" and "mental models," which we use to make sense of our experiences. Learning, therefore, is simply the process of adjusting our mental models to accommodate new experiences

Some of the guiding principles of constructivism are set out in the following statements: (extracted from <http://www.funderstanding.com/constructivism.cfm>)

1. Learning is a search for meaning. Therefore, learning must start with the issues around which students are actively trying to construct meaning.
2. Meaning requires understanding wholes as well as parts. And parts must be understood in the context of wholes. Therefore, the learning process focuses on primary concepts, not isolated facts.
3. In order to teach well, we must understand the mental models that students use to perceive the world and the assumptions they make to support those models.
4. The purpose of learning is for an individual to construct his or her own meaning, not just memorize the "right" answers and regurgitate someone else's mean-

ing. Since education is inherently interdisciplinary, the only valuable way to measure learning is to make assessment part of the learning process, ensuring that it provides students with information on the quality of their learning.

This way of teaching is not really a new development; many teachers have applied these principles to their practice, although it was not supported by any theoretical framework (and it is not a common practice).

As Glasersfeld, states it:

Constructivism does not claim to have made earth-shaking inventions in the area of education; it merely claims to provide a solid conceptual basis for some of the things that, until now, inspired teachers had to do without theoretical foundation.

### **E. Von Glasersfeld (1995)**

The analysis of the historical-cultural paradigm developed by the educational psychologists (Vigotski, Luria) emphasizes the role that culture plays in the formation and development of the psychic functions through the internalisation of the cultural channels by the student (Wertsch, del Río y Álvarez, 1995). Students are learners before coming to the school, they are learners outside the school, after school, and, if they are lucky, even at school. The student internalises the appropriate way to acquire knowledge in very different situations: formal and informal, at school, at home, with classmates. This previous learning experience is really useful at school and teachers should be able to use it to improve the schooling experience. How can we achieve this?

First of all, getting acquainted with students' real interests, experiences, expectations, knowledge,... This is not difficult, it is enough to ask pupils: what do you like to do at home? And with your friends? What are your concerns? What are your expectations? What do you know about...?

Freinet wrote about it:

"... we came down the streets and roads, inebriated by the morning breeze, encouraged by activities that had a profound meaning for us, linked to our present and future life by games...life embraced us and pushed us forward with optimism... We approached the school. We were not short of ideas, we even had original ones; our tongues loosened effortlessly with subtlety and humour; initiatives, whether good or bad, flourished. And, then, abruptly, the bell rang; it created a kind of emptiness... life stopped where school started: a new world, totally different from the world we lived in, with other rules, other obligations, other interests, or, what is even worse, a sometimes dramatic complete lack of interest..."

**(1964, Les techniques de l'école moderne, ed. Armand Colin, Paris).**

As stated in the Memorandum for Lifelong Learning: "People will only plan for consistent learning activities throughout their lives if they want to learn. They will not want to continue to learn if their experiences of learning in early life have been unsuccessful and personally negative (...). They will not feel motivated to take part in learning whose content and methods do not take proper account of their cultural perspectives and life experiences". (EC, 2000:9)

We should be able to link school and life, school and family, and friends, school as a meaningful part of student world. This is the way to guarantee learning, to promote curiosity, motivation for keeping learning about...everything. To do it, it is not necessary to apply complex recipes. It might be enough to avoid some common situations at school. For instance, think of the following example in a Spanish school:

A teacher is explaining the Muslim period (Spanish history, 8<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries). At the same time, TV and media in general are constantly broadcasting news about Muslim war, religion, immigration, terrorism. However, the teacher does not connect both types of information.

### Activity 3

**There are many examples of the de-contextualization of the teaching contents and activities. There are many examples of knowledge which is not meaningful at school. Can you think of and describe any different examples supporting this?**

Relate it to module 3-school, home, community, especially with the distance between school and minority parents/communities.

Another important issue is that of collateral learning:

Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he or she is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned...The most important attitude that can be formed is that of the desire to go on learning.

(Dewey, 1963:p.48)

### What does teaching mean?

Teaching well is a difficult, complex and challenging job. Developing one's mode of teaching to incorporate new and broader goals (especially those heavily loaded towards the development of new and challenging skills, abilities, values and dispositions) is a demanding task. From a constructivist perspective, teachers should act as facilitators of learning, encouraging students to discover principles by themselves.

At school, teaching usually reveals its fundamentally narrative character. This relationship involves a narrating subject (the teacher) and the patient, receptive, listening objects (the students). The contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of being narrated to become lifeless and petrified... The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable. Or else he/she expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential experience of the students. His/her task is to 'fill' the students with the contents of his narration (*educational banking*). (Paulo Freire; 1998:54).

However, we view teaching as a personal experience, a personal interaction, a personal movement forward, a personal learning. Teaching and learning are part of the same experience. We all are teachers and learners at the same time.

I cannot be a teacher without exposing who I am...One of my major preoccupations is the approximation between what I say and what I do, between what I seem to be and what I am actually becoming. The exercise of my teaching activity does not leave me untouched. No more than I could be out in the rain with no protection and expect not to get wet... Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.

**(Freire, Pedagogy of Freedom)**

We, as teachers, must be aware of our own biases and prejudices. It is interesting to remember that most of the assessment of students is based on their personal appearance, their school language competence and their family background. Even if standardised measures are available, we tend to interpret these in a biased way. We should use flexible groups and various resources (people, publications, media, web). We must feel confident with the idea that learning occurs in very diverse situations: visits, interviews, walking session, chat, exchanges,...even in the classroom!).

It is also essential to consider socio-cultural differences among learners: we should recognise differences in the styles of learning and motivation, differences in the experience and kind of interactions of different learners and teachers. These differences are dynamic relations and not fixed entities used to label and classify. The academic difficulties of certain groups cannot be explained/justified in terms of the inability of the student or the group due to supposed genetic deficiencies (Jensen, 1969; Coleman, 1966) or due to social/cultural deficiencies (Cohen & cols. 1968). See *Module 8- Teaching and Learning strategies*.

#### Activity 4

Reflect upon the following issues:

**“Learning depends on the individual characteristics of the person...”**

**“Learning depends on societal context where the students is living...”**

Interview students regarding what they understand by learning, how they like to learn, what things they miss, etc. Read the following excerpts:

“The most significant moment in the course of intellectual development, which gives birth to the purely human forms of practical and abstract intelligence, occurs when speech and practical activity, two previously completely independent lines of development, converge”.

**(Vygotsky, Mind in Society)**

“...People generally learn words in the context of ordinary communication. This process is startling fast and successful. [...] Because it is dependent on situations and negotiations, the meaning of a word cannot, in principle, be captured

by a definition, even when the definition is supported by a couple of exemplary sentences. Situated Cognition and the culture of learning”.

(Brown, J.; Collins, A.; Duguid, P.)

**What can you find in common?**

**How are these statements related to the contents of this module? Please give a concrete example.**

In order to teach and learn from an intercultural perspective, we can draw on the ideas and assumptions of two major educational movements which challenge the dominant paradigms of teaching and learning theories: the New Education philosophy, as conceptualised by John Dewey (included in the curriculum of many courses in teacher training programs, but usually linked to philosophy of education, as historical, or to the theory of education, rarely applied to practice); and Critical Pedagogy, based on Paulo Freire's teachings, and further developed by many critical educators.

Regarding the first one, Dewey (1938) underlines the following principles when formulating the philosophy of education implicit in the practices of the *New Education*, comparing them against traditional practices:

- *Expression and cultivation of individuality* is opposed to impositions from above.
- *Free activity* is opposed to external discipline.
- *Learning through experience* is opposed to learning from texts and teachers.
- Contents are considered as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal, opposed to the acquisition of them
- *Making the most of the opportunities of present life* is opposed to preparation of a more or less remote future
- *Acquaintance with a changing world* is opposed to static aims and materials...

“I take it that the fundamental unity of the **newer philosophy** is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the processes of actual experience and education”.

(Dewey, 1938:19, 20, *Experience and Education*)

Regarding *Critical Pedagogy (CP)*, there is no static definition, although the term has traditionally referred to educational theory and teaching and learning practices that are designed to raise learners' critical consciousness regarding oppressive social conditions. In addition to its focus on personal liberation through the development of critical consciousness, critical pedagogy also has a more collective political component, in that critical consciousness is positioned as the necessary first step of a larger collective political struggle to challenge and transform oppressive social conditions and to create a more egalitarian society. As such, critical educators attempt to disrupt the effects of oppressive regimes of power both in the classroom and in the larger society.

## Background of C.P.

Critical Pedagogy has its roots in the critical theory of the **Frankfurt School**, whose influence is evident in the emancipatory works of **Paulo Freire**, the most renowned critical educator. For Freire, **liberatory education** focuses on the development of critical consciousness, which enables learners to recognise connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded. Coming to consciousness ("**conscientisation**") is the necessary first step of "**praxis**," configured as an ongoing, reflective approach to taking action. Praxis involves engaging in a cycle of theory, application, evaluation, reflection, and then back to theory. Social transformation is the product of praxis at the collective level.

For further information, you can visit Christy Stevens' web page (<http://mingo.info-science.uiowa.edu/~stevens/critped/page1.htm>) where this introduction to C. P. is taken from.

## Activity 5

What do you think about neutrality in education? Is it possible? Is it desirable?

Can intercultural education be neutral? Why or why not?

Can an intercultural teacher be neutral? What does it imply for you as a teacher to be a critical educator or not?

**Read the following text after answering these questions.**

**"Unlike traditional perspectives of education that claim to be neutral and apolitical, critical pedagogy views all education theory as intimately linked to ideologies shaped by power, politics, history and culture. Given this view, schooling functions as a terrain of ongoing struggle over what will be accepted as legitimate knowledge and culture. In accordance with this notion, a critical pedagogy must seriously address the concept of cultural politics y both legitimizing and challenging cultural experiences that comprise the histories and social realities that in turn comprise the forms and boundaries that give meaning to student lives "**

(Darder, 1995)

Try to answer the questions again after reading the text. Is there any difference between your previous and current answers?

Relate your answers to the content of module 1 - compulsory education. Can schooling be a neutral place?

Critical pedagogy is particularly concerned with **reconfiguring the traditional student / teacher relationship**, where the teacher is the active agent, the one who knows, and the students are the passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge (the "**banking concept of education**"). Instead, the classroom is visualised as a site where new knowledge,



grounded in the experiences of students and teachers alike, is produced through meaningful dialogue ([dialogical method](#)).

Do not be afraid of shifting the focus to the learner, of giving your students a more active role in the classroom and other settings, with you acting as facilitator of their learning. This does not imply giving them a lot of individual homework and placing all the responsibility of their learning on their effort in memorising contents, but engaging them in the whole learning process. This will by no means make you a less competent teacher, quite on the contrary, you will be not be seen as an “enemy”, but as someone who believes in their own capabilities.

### Activity 6

**Go back to the answers you gave at the beginning of this module. What is your role as a teacher? And that of your students? (This is not an evaluation, please answer sincerely and honestly!)**

**After reading this module, do you think you should change some aspects of your teaching methodology? Will you consider your students differently now to how you did in the past?**

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## proposals for collaboration

### PROPOSAL 1

Interview other teachers or colleagues on the main questions we have proposed for the module: Ask them to explain what teaching and learning means, focusing on which concepts they consider should be addressed in education, how learning takes place, what they understand by teaching. Discuss with them, after the explanation, which are the theories underlying their practice.

### PROPOSAL 2

Now we propose a collaborative activity based on Action Research, which you can develop with other colleagues, drawing on the main ideas learned throughout the Guide. First, an explanation on Action Research is provided, its usefulness for intercultural education, and finally an example to illustrate the different steps in this methodology. All of this is all available at: (<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/tar.html>).

Teacher Action Research (TAR) is an evaluation method designed to engage educational practitioners in the assessment and improvement of their own practice. It can help classroom teachers to reconsider their teaching methods or to adapt to different situations, and it can also be a community activity, helping teams of educators to address diversity issues in schools and enact changes. It is, in general:

- a non-traditional and community-based form of educational evaluation;
- carried out by educators, not outside researchers or evaluators;
- focused on improving teaching and learning, but also social and environmental factors that affect the nature and success of teaching and learning;
- formative, not summative—an on-going process of evaluation, recommendation, practice, reflection, and re-evaluation; and
- change-oriented, and undertaken with the assumption that change is needed in a given context.

TAR can be a powerful tool for equity and intercultural education because:

- it engages the community in the evaluative effort, and as a result, gives the community ownership of and responsibility for change;
- it is public in nature, and provides a framework for public dialogue about existing concerns and possible solutions;
- it facilitates individual change and growth for the teacher-researchers;
- it is inherently critical and transformational—even if no school-wide change results, the educators are changed by conducting the research, and the school is changed by the change in the educators;
- research shows that teacher-researchers become more critical and reflective about their own practice;
- it acknowledges that teachers are activists, whether we identify with that descriptor or not, and that our everyday actions and decisions play an important role in society and the lives of our students.

Cyclical Stages of TAR, exemplifying the process by addressing issues in Equity and Intercultural Education



An example of implementation could be the following:

**Stage One: Problem Identification:** Acknowledge an inequity and the need for change. Can be an existing (even historical) problem, or a newly emerged issue.

**Stage Two: Evaluation:** Develop and carry out methods for evaluating the breadth and depth of the inequity and how it informs the experiences of all community members.

Evaluation must start with a consideration of the institutional and historical context of the inequity.

**Stage Three: Recommendations:** Based on the Evaluation, provide specific recommendations for change and/or continued evaluation.

**Stage Four: Application/Practice:** Work with the powers that be to take action and institutionalize the recommendations.

**Stage Five: Reflection:** With changes in place, reflect on ways in which new practices affect the school community. Concurrently, reflect on what you, as an individual teacher-researcher, and/or the TAR team learned from the process of the research.

**Stage Six: Consideration of New Questions:** Acknowledge and dialogue about new questions that have emerged from the changes. Have the changes worked? Are there any shortcomings? Did the team uncover additional issues or inequities in the process of the TAR?

## PROPOSAL 3

After reading about the methodology and going through the steps, think of an issue (related to any of the contents of this Guide) you and your colleagues would like to address. It can be something that concerns you, or that you feel needs to be further explored. Engage as many colleagues as you can, and don't forget to engage the students, families and other community agents as well! (See Module 3 on "School, home, community") This could be planned as a project to carry out during the whole school year.



## planning and adapting curriculum

1) Reflect on the official curriculum in your country/region/township (contents and procedures) and its underlying theories or theoretical assumptions (bearing in mind national, regional, local laws regulating school...).

2) Describe a school day...or a maths activity or...

Why do you think the teacher is doing it in that way?

What is the underlying theory that justifies that activity?

What does she/he think about how to teach...how the students learn...?

How would you apply the principles learned in this module to those activities?

3) Go back to the critical incidents at the beginning of the module. How would you overcome distance between school learning and learning achieved out of school? How can we make school learning more meaningful? What can you do to modify the curriculum in such a way that it becomes meaningful to all students?

4) Using the video that complements this guide, watch the activities showing how meaningful learning can be achieved. Think of specific ways in which you can implement this in your own classroom.

5) Visit the following websites on constructivism principles, noting how the focus is on the learner:

<http://tortoise.oise.utoronto.ca/~lbencze/Constructivism.html#dilemmas>.

<http://www.cdli.ca/~elmurphy/emurphy/cle.html> Here you find tips on Socratic dialogue. Can you find ways of implementing this reasoning technique in your teaching practice? Relate its contents to Module 8.

Do you find any useful resources to use in your classroom?



## specific resources and additional links

### Web Sites

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<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/pages/mclaren/>

Page constructed by McLaren, Professor, UCLA, Graduate School of Education. Urban Schooling: Curriculum, Teaching, Leadership & Policy Studies, and designed together with Richard Kahn and Gregory Martin.

This page starts with the following statement: "This website is developed as a resource for students of critical pedagogy. The critical pedagogy which I support and practice advocates non-violent dissent, the development of a philosophy of praxis guided by a Marxist humanism, the study of revolutionary social movements and thought, and the struggle for socialist democracy. It is opposed to liberal democracy, which only serves to facilitate the reproduction of capital. It advocates a multiracial and anti-imperialist social movement dedicated to opposing racism, capitalism (both in private property and state property forms), sexism, heterosexism, hierarchies based on social class, as well as other forms of oppression. It draws its inspiration from philosophers of revolutionary praxis such as Paulo Freire, Raya Dunayevskaya, and other philosophers, social theorists and political activists and supports all those who yearn and struggle for freedom. Critical pedagogy is opposed to both state of terrorism and individual acts of terrorism.

[http://www.21stcenturyschools.com/Site\\_Map.htm](http://www.21stcenturyschools.com/Site_Map.htm)

Anne Shaw is Founder and Director of 21st Century Schools. Main research lines are Critical Pedagogy, Media Literacy and Use of Technology and Multiple forms of Media as vehicles for implementation of the Curriculum. Interesting is the great amount of information and links concerning these themes, such as Articles and Essays, Curriculum Designed, and Resources.

<http://mingo.info-science.uiowa.edu/~stevens/critped/index.htm>

Critical Pedagogy on the Web is managed by Christy Stevens, Student from University of Iowa. In the centre of the page is placed the figure of Paulo Freire. In addition, the information is organized into Critical Pedagogy Definitions, Theories and Theorist, Key Terms and Concepts, as well as Links and Resources.

[http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc\\_data/crit\\_ped.html](http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc_data/crit_ped.html)

Edited by University of California, this link is related to Critical Pedagogy. The page includes notes about authors like Apple, Freire, Giroux and McLaren, and information about "The Critical Theory Institute", "Critical Theory Basis", "Postmodern Blackness by Bell Hooks", "Journal of Critical Pedagogy", "Illuminations: The Critical Theory Web Site", "CTheory Online Journal". bibliography, life profile, references. It also includes references to constructivism:

[http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc\\_data/constructivism.html](http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc_data/constructivism.html)

<http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/crittheory/>

Critical Theory Resources edits information updated in 21 September 2003 and belongs to the British area. It contains General Pages and Links, Bibliographies, Centres & Organizations, Courses, Documents, and Important Figures in Critical Theory.

The Web site is lead by an important list of contemporary authors that work in the field of Cultural Studies, research area close linked to Critical Pedagogy:

<http://www.cas.usf.edu/communication/rodman/cultstud/board.html>

[http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/arts/race\\_songs.html](http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/arts/race_songs.html)

Extracts from popular songs related to education and other topics (e.g. The Wall, Pink Floyd).

<http://tortoise.oise.utoronto.ca/~lbencze/Constructivism.html#dilemmas>.

Practical activities based on constructivist principles.

<http://www.cdli.ca/~elmurphy/emurphy/cle.html>

Constructivism principles– it can also be used in Module 8.



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## educational policies

The way educational policies are analysed in this module try to go beyond the plain understanding of laws, norms, regulations, to identify and recognise the ideological interests underlying models, ideas which give reason and drives all legislation. Educational Policies emerge from specific power concepts, developed, reproduced and supported by the major stakeholders from a specific society.

- **What are the political frames and recommendations about intercultural education at an European and local level?**
- **What are their consequences in school practices?**
- **How can teachers develop intercultural education in this political background?**





## to start thinking

The political space that education occupies today continues to de-emphasize the struggle for teacher and student empowerment; furthermore, it generally serves to reproduce the technocratic, corporate and capitalist ideologies that characterize dominant societies (...) Teaching is often viewed as nearly synonymous with “executing” pre-fashioned methodologies and “delivering” pre-packaged curricula (...) An undue emphasis is placed on training teachers to be managers and implementers of preordained content, and on method courses that rarely provide students with an opportunity to analyze the ideological assumptions and underlying interests that structures the way teaching is taught.

(MacLaren, 1998:1)

Education is intrinsically a political issue. The way in which citizens are educated is related to the kind of society we desire and work for. Which kind of school we want and to which society are the main questions that lie under every educational decision. It is very important to recognise the political dimension of education, many times hidden behind the false neutrality of a pedagogy that pretends to be “scientific” and “neutral”.

Education is always linked to a political project for the individual and the society. What to learn and who must be in charge of teaching are the main items in the educational agenda of politicians. Of course, the curriculum content and the way in which teachers are trained and selected are important factors on the development of the educational process. But education is not a technical matter, nor an “experts” issue, but a human process in which teachers are core agents, and they have much to say and to do.

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**What is the role that educational norms give to teachers and students?**

**Are laws formulated on a democratic basis?**

**Are they a result of social deliberation?**

**Is democracy the inspiring principle on the promulgation and implementation of educational law?**

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## information

There are **three different dimensions** to consider on speaking about educational policy.

1.- The first one, a “critical” level, is related to the educational projects proposed from different political agents, at international, European or local level. These projects are expressed by means of recommendations, working papers, declarations, political discourse, etc. that sometimes have a great influence in the public opinion and contribute to the promotion of social debates or to the development of broad programmes or actions.

One example of this level of policy is the following and recent Declaration of European Ministers of Education on Intercultural Education (Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education: *Intercultural education: managing diversity, strengthening democracy*. Athens, Greece, 10–12 November 2003):

We, the European Ministers of Education of the 48 States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, meeting on the occasion of the 21st session of the Standing Conference in Athens, from 10 to 12 November 2003, adopt the following Declaration:

1. Reiterating, in this symbolic place where it was born, that democracy – the political system common to all our states – is the reference value for both current and future generations;
2. Observing the diversity of our societies in terms of ethnicity, culture, languages, religions and education systems;
3. Having noted the social conflicts and disagreements that may result from the coexistence of different value systems;
4. Wishing to preserve the multicultural nature of European society and to avoid a situation in which globalisation exacerbates the processes of exclusion and marginalisation;
5. Aware of the disturbing persistence in our societies of xenophobic and racist practices, violence and intolerance that sometimes affect education establishments;
6. Recognising that, for over 50 years, the Council of Europe has been working in theory and practice on the development of education for democracy:
  - by applying the fundamental values of the Organisation, in particular human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
  - by emphasising the learning of democracy, as one of the objectives of education policy in Europe, particularly since the first Summit of Heads of State and Government (Vienna, October 1993);

- by capitalising on the wealth of experience gained by the Council of Europe through its priority projects in the education field;
- by implementing the mandate given to the Council of Europe following the second Summit of Heads of State and Government (Strasbourg, October 1997), which recognised education as a priority for the development of democracy and human rights;

7. Recognising the role of intercultural education and the major contribution of the Council of Europe in maintaining and developing the unity and diversity of our European societies;

8. Reiterate our attachment to the European Cultural Convention as the fundamental text where European cooperation in the education field is concerned, and wish to give practical effect to this statement:

- by being closely associated with the celebrations in 2004 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Convention's entry into force;
- by backing the principle to study the possibility of drawing up an additional protocol which would update the text of the Convention to take into account the most significant developments that have occurred in the last few decades as well as the future priorities in the field of education;

9. Note with satisfaction the progress and results of the projects and activities currently being carried out by the Council of Europe, particularly:

- the implementation, in the framework of Recommendation (2001)15 of the Committee of Ministers on "Teaching history in the 21st century" of the "Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity" and the new project on the "European dimension in history teaching", devoted to key dates in the history of the European continent;
- the success achieved by the European Year of Languages and the henceforth annual "European Day of Languages", which each year celebrates linguistic diversity and strengthens intercultural education;
- the launch of the project "the new intercultural challenge to education: religious diversity and dialogue in Europe", which will make a major contribution to the shared goals of mutual understanding, respect, and learning to live together;
- the implementation, in the framework of Recommendation R(2000)4 of the Committee of Ministers of the project on "Education for Roma/Gypsy children", a project that highlights the principles of intercultural education;
- the programme on the strategies and initiatives aimed at learning democracy, pursued in conjunction with higher education institutions, and concerned with the Bologna Process, the Lisbon Convention (drawn up jointly with Unesco), participatory governance, quality assurance and public accountability, under a life-long learning approach;
- the project on "education for democratic citizenship and human rights", a project which should be extended during the "Year of Citizenship through Educa-

tion" in 2005 and beyond, through the implementation of Recommendation(2002)12 and development of the concept of learning democracy;

10. Call on the Council of Europe :

- to attach greater importance to education in general and, on the strength of its experience in this area, to successfully pursue the aspects of its work programme relating to, amongst others, educational policies, history teaching, language policies and education for democratic citizenship;
- to pursue its co-operation in the field of education for citizenship and democracy on the basis of the fundamental principles of the Organisation;
- to focus its work programme on enhancing the quality of education as a response to the challenges posed by the diversity of our societies by making democracy learning and intercultural education key components of educational reform;

11. Request the Council of Europe, as an organisation with a wealth of experience in the fields of managing diversity, intercultural education and quality education, to tailor its education programme and working methods in order to implement the following strategies and give fresh impetus to these activities by developing a coherent, feasible and integrated action plan; In this connection, it should:

- relaunch conceptual research on intercultural education with a view to adapting terminology and clearly defining the content and context of intercultural education;
- help to build understanding of the European dimension of education in the context of globalisation, by introducing respect for human rights and diversity, foundations for managing diversity, openness to other cultures, inter-religious dialogue and "Euro-Arab dialogue";
- step up efforts in the area of content of learning methods and teaching aids, in order to provide the member states with examples of educational tools making it possible to take the intercultural dimension of curricula into account;
- develop analytical instruments and identify and disseminate examples of good practice emphasising intercultural and pluralist approaches, in school textbooks;
- develop programmes aimed at communication and mutual understanding, particularly through language learning and by encouraging awareness raising for the added value of linguistic diversity in multicultural societies;
- encourage the member states to introduce the intercultural dimension in their education policies, in order to enable appropriate consideration of dialogue between cultures;
- encourage research focusing on social learning and cooperative learning in order to take into account the "learning to live together" and intercultural aspects in all teaching activities;

- support initiatives and experiments with democratic governance in schools, particularly through partnership, youth participation and cooperation with communities, parents and civil society;
- develop quality assurance instruments inspired by education for democratic citizenship, taking account of the intercultural dimension, and develop quality indicators and tools for self-evaluation and self-focused development for educational establishments;
- identify models of good practice in the areas of democratic governance and quality assurance in schools and prepare their potential users to be able to make use of them;
- strengthen intercultural education and management of diversity within its programme of in-service training for education staff and encourage member states to contribute to that programme by organising seminars on topics directly linked to the aims of the present Declaration;
- devise and promote work methodologies that are suitable to integrate into states' own initial and in-service training programmes the principles of non-discrimination, pluralism and equity;
- recognise the potential of ICTs as a tool for promoting intercultural learning in a global context;
- develop educational strategies and working methods to prepare teachers to manage the new situations arising in our schools as a result of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, sexism and marginalisation and to resolve conflicts in a non-violent way;
- encourage the development of professional competencies for the teaching profession, taking account of skills existing within a team linked to the roles of learning facilitator, mediator, counsellor, partner and human resources manager;
- foster a global approach to institutional life in order to create a community of students, taking account of the hidden curriculum, school atmosphere, a school's organisational ethos and non-formal education;
- encourage member states to acknowledge that managing diversity is not a problem in schools alone, but concerns the whole of society, particularly with regard to policies implemented in the social, family and migration fields;

12. Call on the Council of Europe to organise a European Year of Citizenship through Education (2005), which will make it possible to capitalise on and implement the achievements of the Council of Europe in the field of education for democracy;

13. Recognise the specific contribution of the Council of Europe to education for democracy and wish new synergies to be forged between the work of this Organisation and that of its major partners, particularly the European Union, Unesco and the OECD;

14. Give support to existing global processes dedicated to the development of education, such as Education for All (Dakar Action Plan), Quality Lifelong Learning, Education for

Sustainable Development (such as the United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development), and Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights;

15. Are resolved to make the necessary arrangements to take intercultural education into account as an important component of our education policies; this entails appropriate measures at the levels of curricula, school governance and teacher training.

2.- Laws and explicit norms constitutes the second “normative” level of influence of policy on practice. They are supposed to be inspired by some kind of political project. They try to organize the educational system and define the minimum and common contents of the curriculum as well as the proceedings to select teachers.

3.- The third level, linked to real practice, refers to the specific measures that educational agents (including teachers) develop in order to apply laws and norms.

Very often we find a great distance between what is declared and what is governed by laws, as well as between the mandate of law and its implementation. One example refers to the implementation of compensatory measures. Compensatory measures in Education are based in a political project that claims to look for social equity; the original idea is to give a specific educational treatment to deprived students in order to compensate their “deficiencies” and reach an actual equality of opportunities for all students. However, in practice, compensatory measures lead to the implementation of “special” classrooms in which disrupting or low level students are grouped and segregated, receiving low level teaching and making wider the distance between them and the other “standard” students.

The model of society that on the basis of intercultural education tends to find the balance between individual and society, between diversity and equality, between equity and freedom. It is an inclusive society, where difference is no more or less than difference: not lacking no threat.

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### **How close or far from the intercultural model of society is European society?**

#### **To what extent is intercultural education implemented in European countries?**

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The following text is extracted from the *Needs Assessment Report on Intercultural Education* (2003), an analysis developed by the INTER team as a prior step to the development of this guide:

“When we start to collect EU documentation on this subject the first thing that we noticed was the difficulty in finding references through descriptive or search terms that are essential concepts at the heart of our study such as: intercultural education, cultural diversity, cultural mediation, etc. For this reason we have had to resort to other related search terms (although they are reductive) such as: immigration, integration of minorities, etc. In the context of the EU policies

aimed at favouring European cohesion and achieving a new concept for European citizenship linked –not always explicitly– to the intercultural focus, have been directed two main concepts, both related to the world of education:

- The development of linguistic competence, multilingual capability as a way achieving an intercultural European identity.
- The fight against racism and xenophobia”.

Together with these two lines of development of the European policy, there is a third one, more incipient: *the development of the intercultural education*, posed from seeking and constructing a new concept of culture. This is the case of some declarations, as the one previously cited, Athens (2003) or the DICTAMEN of the Committee of the Regions on the “Intercultural Education” (1997).

Another important aspect of European policies, although not directly linked to the educational world, points to the policies of immigration in the different Member States which, very often, are in contradiction with the various EU Declarations that insist on the defence of the human rights, on the development of the principles of equality, and on the need to adopt measures against discrimination and social exclusion, addressing a series of different circumstances, among others, cultural diversity. The EU proposals in order to deliver the integration of immigrants, which initially have been based on specific measures aimed at immigrants from third non-community countries to help bring them closer to the languages and culture of the EU host country, also contain recognition of certain rights, among others the right to be educated and to protect their cultural identity promoting knowledge of their mother tongue. Nevertheless, the most recent declarations on the social integration of immigrants already pose the need of a non-segregated awareness, that should be based on the use of regular methods and services under the same conditions as the rest of population.

1. Regarding this, we may conclude from the local reports that in fact all countries have shown a generalized concern on **linguistic integration**, and all of them have developed language programs usually to teach the majority language. There is also some degree of concern respecting mother tongues; in some countries there is only a nominal concern, but in other ones there are government sponsored programs to teach minority languages (but always stressing the importance of learning majority languages as a way to integrate).

Some examples of the contradiction between the respect for minority languages stated in the laws and compulsory learning of the main languages are the following ones:

- In Latvia, students who graduate from secondary specialized and vocational secondary school have to pass an examination in the official language in higher education.
- In Norway, measures for speakers of minority languages should be temporary, until a pupil has acquired sufficient skills to follow mainstream tuition.

**Identify in your country/city/community the main concepts used in your legal documents. Analyse the kind of reality that they reflect.**

**Does your school system “stream”?**

**How is this done?**

**Do you think all school systems stream? What problems can arise from streaming, or from excessive streaming?**

2. In relation to the second main area of concern in European laws, the **fight against racism and xenophobia**, it can be concluded from the local reports that principles of tolerance (in this way we have to point out that the term ‘*tolerance*’ implies discrimination), no discrimination and respect for others are in the basis of all the legislations. We can point out two different kind of problems: the first of them refers to the use of the word ‘*tolerance*’, that entails some degree of superiority in the main society towards the minorities; the second one refers to the difficulty to find specific measures against racism. In the following lines we examples some examples that seem clearly insufficient because of its temporary character and superficial treatment:

- In **Britain**, The Commission for Racial Equality has published the “Education Code of Practice for England and Wales for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Education” ([www.cre.gov.uk/gdpract/ed\\_cop\\_ew.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/gdpract/ed_cop_ew.html) ). But this is only a guide for teachers and it is not included in the curriculum.
- In **Czech Republic**, the government supports several projects and campaigns against racism, but they are mainly music festivals and exhibitions. An important program on intercultural education, called Varianty, includes a media campaign called “Be kind to your local nazi”.
- In the EU several norms and resolutions have been approved for the eradication and prevention of racism and xenophobia, and against segregation. This is the case of the Resolution on the answer of the educational systems to the problems of racism and xenophobia (1995). Nonetheless, these policies have developed in a parallel way with the policies on migration of the different State members, which have provoked important labour discriminations, with impact on the conditions of life of the workers “without papers” coming from extra-communitarian poor countries.

3.- Regarding the third core measure, the development of **intercultural education**, the references found are still very limited in the EU documents, as well as in the legislation in any of the local reports analyse for this guide. One of the nearest terms has been found in the report from England, and this is: “inclusive education”. In the following lines we see an extract from this report:

“In England, each subject of the curriculum has to consider four general teaching requirements: inclusion, language, ICT, and health and safety. The inclusion statement is based on the following three principles:

1. Setting suitable learning challenges
2. Responding to pupil’s diverse learning needs



### 3. Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The third principle refers to pupils having a special educational needs or disability or pupil's learning English as an additional language".

Again, this is an example of "rhetoric discourse", and we wonder if only by providing examples of good practice a change will be induced to obtain actual results.

Regarding the proposal of the *European Statement of Athens (2003)* of seeking and constructing a new concept of culture (included in the third core measure), we observe that no specifications follow as how to do it, and again we wonder if this is one more example of "rhetoric discourse".

Although the contents of intercultural education are scarce and unequal in the diverse programmes and actions of the EU, the most recent approaches tend to get closer – in an incipient manner – to the intercultural focus, as the only possible way towards true citizenship based on democratic values. This will require, undoubtedly, an important turn in their policies, still primarily grounded in economic parameters, to include new cultural and social values.

From our perspective, there is still a fear of differences underneath all discourses regarding diversity, as if minorities despite of their origin, were considered as a threat to national identities and their supposed homogeneity. So minority differences have to be 'tolerated' but, at the same time, shown the path to a full integration into the main societies. Attention to minorities seems, most of the time, to imply a general pattern which usually leads to reinforcing the identity of the main society.

The main conclusions after this analysis were:

- Legal documents on intercultural education are rather scarce. Documents on cultural diversity and equality within the context of the EU, in most cases, they are intended to favour cohesion and to reach a new concept of European citizenship.
- The concept of diversity used by the laws and/or normative documents can be considered discriminatory in itself since: a) it labels people, making clusters out of them, b) it segregates certain groups of students from the rest of them who are labelled as 'standard', and finally c) it points out some differences hiding others which may be equally important for students' education. And, as a consequence, they are measures which address diversity in a way that show a trend to discriminate. Again, compensatory measures can be thought of as a good example of this pattern.

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**Why is there such a great gap between political discourse and legal measures implementation?**

**How can we understand this distance, avoiding the rethoric of discourse about education goals as well as the deviation of the practice?**

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This is of a great importance to identify the economic and political interests that lie under the process of regulation and implementation of educational policies. These interests (from textbook editors interests to political parties manipulation, from teachers' corporative interests to labour market requirements) outline the conflict between the declared goals and the real functions of education (see Module 1).

Democratic societies trend to comply with the requirements of an intercultural society. But democracy is not an univocal concept, but a complex one. Indeed, it is more than a concept, democracy is a project to be developed: It consists of habits and competences that require cultivation. A democratic mind is not natural, it does not arise spontaneously.

Democrats are not born but educated (...) Democrats means men and women who are committed to ways of living together marked by popular sovereignty rather than authoritarianism, genuine cultural pluralism rather than oppression in the name of political unity, and a fundamental commitment to liberty, law, justice and equality as the moral ground of social life.

(Banks, 1996)

A democratic mind is the main characteristic of a citizen.

People who argue for their positions in a town meeting are acting like citizens. People who simply drop scraps of paper in a box or pull a lever are not acting like citizens; they are acting like consumers, picking between pre-packaged political items. They had nothing to do with the items.

(Hess, 1979, cited by Parker, 1996)

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**Has actual school anything to do with the development of the democratic mind?**

**Can citizenship education be a way for school to contribute to the transformation of society?**

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Citizenship is not a status, but a practice that should be learned. The core curriculum must be guided towards the education for democracy, that means citizenship education (See Glossary). Again, there are there are two views in the definition of citizenship education: the passive one, training for conformity and obedience, that implies teaching of facts about government, constitutions, duties and responsibilities of a good citizen; the other, educating for the future citizen for active participation in a democratic society, that means understanding political ideas and conflicts and developing democratic attitudes and values, including the willingness to be critical of the *status quo*.

What are the habits and competences that characterise a democratic citizen? Kubow, Grossman and Ninomiya (1996) have defined the following ones:

- Ability to look and approach problems as a member of a global society
- Ability to work with others in a cooperative way and to take responsibility for one's roles/duties within society
- Ability to understand, accept, appreciate and tolerate cultural differences

- Capacity to think in a critical and systemic way
- Willingness to resolve conflict in a non-violent manner
- Willingness to change one's lifestyle and consumption habits to protect the environment
- Ability to be sensitive towards and to defend human rights
- Willingness and ability to participate in politics at local, national and international level.

The Council of Europe is also concerned on the development of Citizenship Education. Here it is an extract of the main guidelines of European Ministers of Education on this subject:

Education for Democratic Citizenship	Recommendation Rec (2002)12 of the Committee of the <i>Council of Europe</i> Ministers to member states on Education for Democratic Citizenship	Declaration of European Conference of Ministers of Education. Cracow, Poland, October 2000
<b>Definition and objectives</b>	<p>Education for democratic citizenship should be seen as embracing any formal, non-formal or informal educational activity, including that of the family, enabling an individual to act throughout his or her life as an active and responsible citizen respectful of the rights of others. Education for democratic citizenship as defined in this recommendation covers specific disciplines and varied or cross-curricular fields of learning and institutions in the member states, depending on their traditional approach to this area. For instance, it might involve civic, political or human rights education, all of which contribute to education for democratic citizenship without covering it completely. In order to fulfil the general aims of education for democratic citizenship, the following actions are needed:</p> <p>Encouraging multidisciplinary approaches and actions combining civic and political education with the teaching of history, philosophy, religions, languages, social sciences and all disciplines having a bearing on ethical, political, social, cultural or philosophical aspects, whether in terms of their actual content or the options or consequences involved for a democratic society;</p> <p>Combining the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and skills, and giving priority to those which reflect the fundamental values to which the Council of Europe is particularly attached, notably human rights and the rule of law;</p> <p>Paying particular attention to the acquisition of the attitudes necessary for life in multi-cultural societies, which respect differences and are concerned with their environment, which is undergoing rapid and often unforeseeable changes.</p>	<p>Education for democratic citizenship is based on a multi-faceted and process-focused approach to citizenship which includes the following dimensions:</p> <p>Political- participation in the decision-making process and exercise of political power;</p> <p>Legal - being aware of and exercising citizens' rights and responsibilities;</p> <p>Cultural- respect for all peoples, basic democratic values, both a shared and divergent history and heritage, and contributing to peaceful intercultural relations;</p> <p>Social and economic- in particular, the fight against poverty and exclusion, considering new forms of work and community development, and how the economy can foster a democratic society;</p> <p>European - being aware of the unity and diversity of European culture, and learning to live in a European context;</p> <p>Global- recognising and promoting global inter-dependence and solidarity.</p>

Education for Democratic Citizenship	Recommendation Rec (2002)12 of the Committee of the <i>Council of Europe</i> Ministers to member states on Education for Democratic Citizenship	Declaration of European Conference of Ministers of Education. Cracow, Poland, October 2000
<b>Approaches and teaching-learning methods</b>	<p>The knowledge, attitudes, values and key competencies, as described above, cannot be truly and effectively acquired without having recourse to diversified educational methods and approaches in a democratic environment. Such acquisition should be encouraged:</p> <p>Through active participation of pupils, students, educational staff and parents in democratic management of the learning place, in particular, the educational institution;</p> <p>Through the promotion of the democratic ethos in educational methods and relationships formed in a learning context;</p> <p>by promoting learner-centred methods, including project pedagogic based on adopting a joint, shared objective and fulfilling it in a collective manner, whether such projects are defined by a class, a school, the local, regional, national, European or international community, or by the various civil society organisations involved in education for democratic citizenship (non-governmental organisations, enterprises, professional organisations);</p> <p>by promoting research, personal study and initiative;</p> <p>by adopting an educational approach closely combining theory and practice;</p> <p>by involving learners in the individual and collective assessment of their training, particularly within the aforementioned project-based methods;</p> <p>by encouraging exchanges, meetings and partnerships between pupils, students and teachers from different schools so as to improve mutual un-</p>	<p>EDC:</p> <p>Is a lifelong learning process;</p> <p>Is social learning, that is, learning for, in and about society, and learning to live together;implies the democratisation of learning by focusing on the learner and her or his autonomy and responsibility in the learning process, hence implying the reciprocity of teaching and learning;</p> <p>Is achieved through multiple, interconnected, transversal learning approaches, for example through civic education, human rights education, intercultural education, education for peace and global understanding and media education;</p> <p>Is based on experience and practice;</p> <p>Requires an open curriculum which includes participative and interactive approaches based upon learning through experience, action and co-operation;</p> <p>Takes place in a broad range of formal and non-formal education settings, which increasingly need to converge, such as</p>

Education for Democratic Citizenship	Recommendation Rec (2002)12 of the Committee of the <i>Council of Europe</i> Ministers to member states on Education for Democratic Citizenship	Declaration of European Conference of Ministers of Education. Cracow, Poland, October 2000
	<p>derstanding between individuals;</p> <p>by promoting and strengthening education and awareness-raising approaches and methods throughout society, and particularly among pupils and students, that are conducive to a climate of tolerance, and to the respect of cultural and religious diversity;</p> <p>by bringing formal, non-formal and informal education closer together;</p> <p>by setting up civic partnerships between the school, the family and the community,</p> <p>by promoting and strengthening education and awareness-raising approaches and methods throughout society, and particularly among pupils and students, that are conducive to a climate of tolerance, and to the respect of cultural and religious diversity;</p> <p>by bringing formal, non-formal and informal education closer together;</p> <p>by setting up civic partnerships between the school and the family, the community, the workplace and the media.</p>	<p>the family, schools and universities, adult education, the workplace, enterprise, NGOs, local communities, the media, cultural and leisure initiatives;</p> <p>Is reinforced by continual evaluation, in particular learners' self-assessment.</p>

<b>Skills and competences</b>	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>settle conflicts in a non-violent manner;</li> <li>argue in defense of one's viewpoint;</li> <li>listen to, understand and interpret other people's arguments;</li> <li>recognise and accept differences;</li> <li>make choices, consider alternatives and subject them to ethical analysis;</li> <li>shoulder shared responsibilities;</li> <li>establish constructive, non-aggressive relations with others;</li> <li>develop a critical approach to information, thought patterns and philosophical, religious, social, political and cultural concepts, at the same time remaining committed to fundamental values and principles of the Council of Europe.</li> </ul>	<p>Democratic citizenship skills and competencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are part of social and life skills;</li> <li>give equal importance to knowledge and values, and attitudes and the capacity for action and participation in a democratic society;</li> <li>imply that citizens should learn to be free, autonomous and creative, to think critically, be aware of their rights and responsibilities, and be able to participate in teamwork, peaceful dialogue and negotiation</li> <li>are constituent elements of educational strategies for democratic citizenship;</li> <li>need to be learned, maintained and renewed constantly, at all age levels.</li> </ul>
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## activities and suggestions

### Activity 1

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Read carefully the Declaration of Athens of the European Ministers of Education in the information section. Answer these questions:

- **What is the conception of diversity expressed in the document?**
- **Could you find any contradiction or disagreement with regard to intercultural vision of diversity? Justify your answer.**
- **Do you think the European recommendations are being applied in your local context? Why?**
- **Are you aware of examples of practices in tune with the European recommendations about intercultural education? Can you describe them?**
- **If we intend to develop the recommendations about intercultural education at the school, in your opinion, what kind of decisions should be made? What kind of tasks and resources need to be promoted?**

### Activity 2

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One of the main decisions about educational policies is the criteria and procedures (initial teacher training, exams, accreditations) that each educational system applies in order to select teachers.

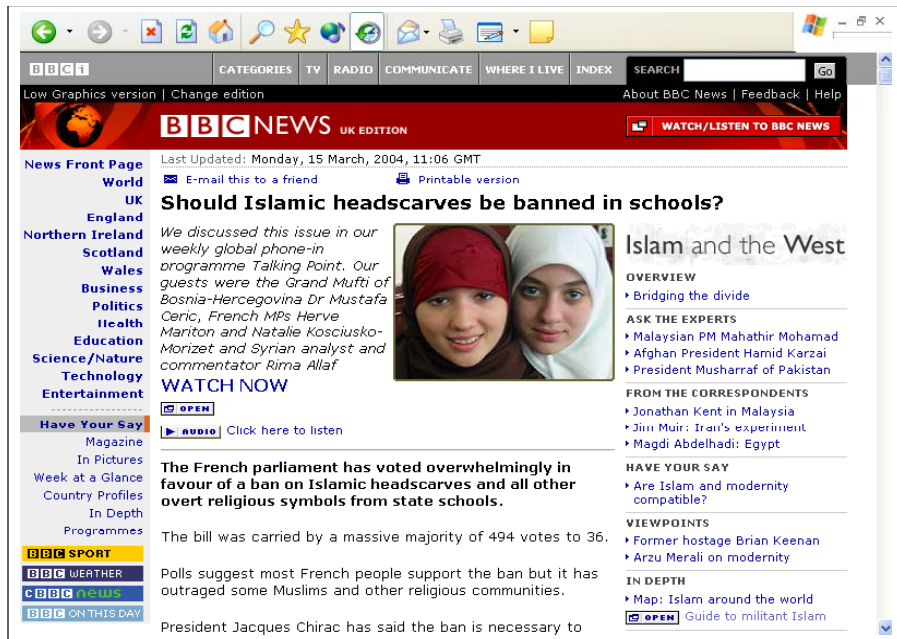
- **What are these processes in your own country / city / community?**
- **What are the requirements for becoming a teacher in the public system?**
- **What is your opinion about them?**
- **Are they appropriate from an intercultural approach? If so, why?**



The Council of Europe concluded the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as early as in 1950 – and included in Article 9 ECHR the freedom of religion as the common basis for all States.

(Source: Jean Monnet Working Paper 13/03. Lasia Bloß. *European Law of Religion – organizational and institutional analysis of national systems and their implications for the future European Integration Process*)

Now read the following news items and analyse the different situations from the perspective of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Fundamental Freedom cited above.



The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. The main headline is "Should Islamic headscarves be banned in schools?". Below the headline, there is a sub-headline "Islam and the West" and a photo of two women wearing headscarves. The article text discusses a discussion on the issue in the weekly global phone-in programme "Talking Point". It mentions guests: the Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina Dr Mustafa Ceric, French MPs Herve Mariton and Natalie Kosciusko-Morizet, and Syrian analyst and commentator Rima Allaf. There is a "WATCH NOW" section with an "AUDIO" link. The article continues with the headline "The French parliament has voted overwhelmingly in favour of a ban on Islamic headscarves and all other overt religious symbols from state schools." and mentions that the bill was carried by a massive majority of 494 votes to 36. It also notes that polls suggest most French people support the ban but it has outraged some Muslims and other religious communities. The article concludes with "President Jacques Chirac has said the ban is necessary to".

Picture 1: Lila and Alma Levy.

Lévi Soul specified: "We made concessions, we decided to dress colour veils and chadors, but we cannot accept that our hair, ears and neck remained visible."

The Federal Constitutional Court of Germany failed yesterday that Muslim teachers will be able to wear hijab, the Islamic headscarf, during the class; whereas the Federated States do not prohibit it by law. The decision of the maximum court of Karlsruhe does not end

the conflict, that lasts five years already, through all the German judicial instances.

**(El País 25-09-2003)**

In an increasingly secular society, there are, naturally, many who have no religious faith at all, and a controversial law in Bavaria decreeing that a crucifix should be displayed in each classroom was successfully challenged in court by atheist parents of a child attending one of the schools concerned. In a judgment dating from 21 April 1999<sup>1</sup> the Federal Administrative Court upheld the parents' right under Article 4 (1) GG not to believe in any religion. The Court concluded that the mere fact that they did not wish their daughter to be exposed to religious influences of any kind was enough to compel the school administrators to remove the crucifix<sup>2</sup>.

In some European countries, the veil does not seem to be a problem. Schools in Great Britain, Spain, Holland and some Scandinavian countries allow students and educators to use it. In Belgium and Italy do not exist laws that prohibit it, although the school authorities have the autonomy to make such decisions on this issue.

If we consider the situation having into account the information offered on EU Educational policies on attention to diversity some questions arise:

- **What's your opinion on this issue?**
- **What would happen in your country in a similar situation?**
- **Would you say that this reality agrees with the EU directives, and the World Declaration of Human Rights on education and equality issues?**
- **In relation to the French news item on the veil, what other solutions could have been proposed?**

**You can check if there is any kind of agreement with specific religious groups in your country.**

<sup>1</sup> BVerwG 6 C 18.98, 21 April 1999

<sup>2</sup> Already in 1995, the Federal Constitutional Court decided that the installation of a crucifix in classrooms was a violation of Article 4 (1) GG declaring an according Bavarian law prescribing an obligatory crucifix in each classroom unconstitutional and therefore void, BVerfG – BvR 1087/91, 16 May 1995. The Federal Constitutional Court Bundesverfassungsgericht decided on 24 September 2003 in favor of an Islamic female teacher, Fereshta Ludin, however with the caveat that the Bundesländer could pass legislation prohibiting the wearing of religious symbols.



## proposals for collaboration

### PROPOSAL 1

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Check the information included at [www.eurydice.org](http://www.eurydice.org) about educational systems in Europe. You may find there details on the political and economic framework of different countries. Try to find references to intercultural education and citizenship education.

**To which political dimension (critical, normative, practice linked) do your findings belong?**

**Try to establish relations between different critical and normative documents, as well as between them and real practice.**

Write down your conclusions.

### PROPOSAL 2

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Review the legal documents in your country which are devoted to education.

**Try to identify laws, norms, recommendations and other legislative issues intended fully or partly to pay specific attention to differences or intercultural education.**

### PROPOSAL 3

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The Atlántida Project web site, [www.proyecto-atlantida.org](http://www.proyecto-atlantida.org) offers resources to reflect about the situation of the public school, and proposes ideas to improve democratic values at school.

- **Do you know similar websites or projects in your own local context?**
- **Which are the main assumptions and ideas they propose?**
- **How could they affect your own daily practice?**

**PROPOSAL 4**

Organise a discussion group with your colleagues on the professional role of teachers:

- **What kind of professional must a teacher be? (A technician, an expert on a main subject, an educator...)**
- **Can everyone be a good teacher?**
- **What should be the personal characteristics of a teacher?**
- **Which would be the best procedure for selecting teachers?**
- **What kind of training should they receive?**

**PROPOSAL 5****Role-play Education Policy**

Form 4 groups:

Ministry of Education – Minister and officials – Teachers Union – Syndicate coordinator and branch leaders – Parents Association – President and school representatives – Minority Culture Club – Secretary and club members.

Each group should be of medium size, of no more of six people. The four groups will meet first in order to prepare the role play and to choose the member who will represent the group. After this preparation, the representatives will be ready for the role play.

**(Hypothetical case)**

The role play begins with an article which appeared in the national newspaper which accuses the Ministry of using a higher budget for immigrant students in secondary schools than for children of the majority population. In the article, there is some suggestion that **minority language teachers also do not have appropriate qualifications and even get a higher rate of pay than the regular teachers**. This raised protest from the national association of parents. At the same time, the teachers association threatened a strike if teacher salaries are not raised immediately. In order to address these issues, the Minister has invited all parties to this meeting in order to arrive at a consensus.

Rules:

- Each group receives a confidential brief (see following page):
- The role game should try to find a solution to the different claims, which all parties can agree with.
- The Ministry opens with the 1st round of statements, then each group presents their views (3-5 min each).
- After 15 m. discussion, the Ministry should put forward a compromise decision, and ask all to agree to it.
- At this point the role-play is over.

In a de-briefing session, undertake the following steps:

- Write down which constraints education policy has to address.
- Write down what the goals of an education Ministry should be.
- Try to think of a solution for the above dilemma.
- Discuss and agree on the prioritisation of values and objectives for an
- Education Minister (rank by importance).

## **Confidential Papers**

### **Ministry of Education**

You are aware that minority teachers have a higher hourly pay than the rest, but the former are not in regular employment. Minority language teaching is mandatory by a constitutional provision but not necessarily for immigrant children. Naturally, the Finance Minister told you not to agree to an additional pay rise for teachers, as they had their yearly pay-rise of 3,5% only 4 months ago when the union leadership from the opposition party agreed to your deal and promised no more protest action for the whole year. Your only goal is to get this situation solved and hopefully a joint press communiqué for the newspaper.

### **Teachers Union:**

You find it unfair that unqualified and not qualified teachers receive a higher compensation than your members. This is against the labour law, which prescribes the same pay for the same work. Moreover, you have lost many members, and want to take this opportunity to get them back. A pay-rise of at least 6% is your minimum expectation, and a mandatory exam for minority language teachers. Moreover, teachers have reported that in some languages mother-tongue education is futile and useless, as children are not able to speak correctly, let alone read and write, their languages as they underwent primary schooling in the national language.

### **Parents:**

You push the argument of the newspaper: why should the state spend more money on foreign children than your own, especially as you pay taxes! You are ashamed how far the level of school teaching has been sinking lately, and cite an assessment document (precise?) in which your country has fallen 10 places, and is now only ranked 17th (for example) in Europe.

### **Minority Club:**

Children of minority groups are constitutionally granted education in their mother tongue – a provision which the state has neglected so far. Only for immigrant communities in cities some language teaching is now offered, although this takes place in the afternoon and outside the school schedule. The pay for language assistants is much lower than on the open market for translation and interpretation and you have difficulties in finding people to do the job. As a result, you have engaged lawyers to initiate a law-suit with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.



## planning and adapting curriculum

One of the aspects that should be considered at this point in order to include the different groups within the space of a school community would be to take into account the diverse ideas, sensibilities, etc. in the development of inner rules and norms, not only from their position in relation to the power, religion, language or gender but also from the aesthetic perspective, for instance, or any other expressions which may result in a negative affect when they are limited or even banned.

To complete this part of the guide, we suggest to you the following activities:

1. Gather some documents related to planning the curriculum in your local context. You can use some documents from your own school or ones obtained from a Resources Centre or a library, etc. (In Spain a document could be the *Proyecto de Centro* / School Project).

- **Does the document fit the requirements of the intercultural approach? Justify the answer.**
- **What suggestions you would give in order to fit those requirements?**

2. Citizenship education curriculum must be “deliberation-based”: the core practice should be discussion on the ethical questions and recommend suitable public action. Develop a project for a real discussion activity to be carried out in your classroom.



## specific resources and additional links

### Websites

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[http://www.coe.int/T/e/Cultural\\_Co-operation/Education/E.D.C.](http://www.coe.int/T/e/Cultural_Co-operation/Education/E.D.C.) Web page of the Council of Europe on Education for Democratic Citizenship Project (EDC). It provides with European guidelines on this important subject.

[www.eurydice.org](http://www.eurydice.org). Database about educational systems in Europe.

### Books/articles

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**Declaration of European Ministers of Education on Intercultural Education** (Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education: *Intercultural education: managing diversity, strengthening democracy*. Athens, Greece, 10–12 November 2003)

**Declaration on the racial race and prejudices**, approved by the General Conference of the United Nations for the Education, Science and the Cultural one, in Paris the 27 of November of 1978.

**Parker**, Walter C. (ed.) (1996). *Educating the democratic mind*. Nueva York: State University of New York Press.

**Cogan**, John J. & **Derricott**, Ray (eds.) (2000). *Citizenship for the 21st century. An International perspective on Education*. London: Kogan Page.

**MacLaren**, Peter (1998). *Life in schools. An introduction to critical pedagogy in the foundations of education*. Harlow: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

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## reflective questions and evaluation

### Local Policies on Schooling

In many European cities their school centres (public and private) do not reflect among their teaching staff the same cultural diversity as their students...

- **Is this the case in your city?**
- **What resources, political or participative, do teachers have in your area to enable you to take part in the development of solutions to avoid students' segregation (for reasons of achievement, cultural identity, religion, socio-economical level, gender, etc.)?**

### Teaching staff

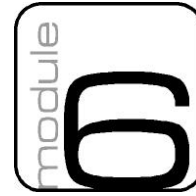
In the various European countries, the trend is for the composition of the teaching staff to consist of a wider representation than that of the dominant culture...

- **Is the same case in your area?**
- **In your area are there teachers from other cultures present in your society?**
- **What strategies could be applied in order to guarantee a more representative, broader and heterogeneous teaching staff?**

### Norms and legislation

Starting from the situation in your own country, what means of participation do your teachers have within the collective processes of decision making or within the school administrative structures?





## evaluation and quality

Sociologists have analysed the barriers and mechanisms that block social mobility and their verdict is clear: schools, particularly their evaluation and grading systems, are the main instrument of social differentiation and stratification.

**(Cardinet, in: Fernández Pérez, 1994)**

Without evaluation, neither school success nor failure would exist. Both are the result of appraisals, intuitions and techniques which teachers put into practice in order to evaluate and classify their students.

**(Perrenaud, 1995, *La fabrication de l'excellence scolaire: du curriculum aux pratiques d'évaluation*)**

In this module we will address some key issues related to evaluation and assessment of the teaching and learning processes, focusing on its role and consequences in education.



## to start thinking

### What Do You Expect?

A teacher's high — or low — expectations can yield a profound influence on students:

“As your new students take their seats on the first day of school, no doubt some quick impressions will leap to mind: *She certainly looks enthusiastic and bright...He's day-dreaming already...Her second-grade teacher mentioned that she was a troublemaker; I wonder if she'll act up?*

As fallible humans, it's natural to make judgments, both positive and negative. A child's socioeconomic status, language ability, past performance, appearance, weight, and numerous other factors can subtly influence our perceptions of that child. What many people do not realize, however, is that the early assumptions we make can often become self-fulfilling prophecies. A student labeled as “gifted” may succeed, while a student branded as a “troublemaker” or as a “low achiever” might fall behind. But what pivotal role do we as teachers play in influencing these outcomes?”

By Ann **Gazin** [http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/Aug04\\_expectations.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/instructor/Aug04_expectations.htm)

### Cultural Diversity and Academic Achievement

“One of the most serious and explosive issues in the United States today is how to meet the educational needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. If current trends in educational achievement continue, millions of students (...) will not obtain the education necessary for full participation in the economic and civic life of the country.

Differences in the academic performance of children appear early. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NEAP) reported that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and many children of multi-ethnic backgrounds consistently achieve below the national average in mathematics and language skills, with the gap widening as children continue through their school years. The longer some children stay in school, the greater the discrepancy between their educational performance and that of white and middle-class students. Gradually and inexorably, the chances for academic success

diminish for poor and minority students as they are launched into trajectories of failure (Alexander and Entwisle, 1988, p. 1). (...) by ignoring the differences between children - their experiences, their beliefs, their traditional practices - schools limit their own ability to educate these children.”

By Barbara T. **Bowman**

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/educatrs/leadrsdp/le0bow.htm#author>

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**How does this apply to your own country?**

**Who is being systematically left out of school?**

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The famous experiment depicted in *Pygmalion in the classroom* (also known as the Oak School experiment) by Rosenthal & Jacobson<sup>3</sup> clearly showed the impact of teachers' expectations on the behaviour and achievement of children. There are too many examples of under-achievers or “drop-outs” among children from low-income families, working classes, or children from different social and ethnic backgrounds, among others. Take a close look at the higher levels of education in your country: how many students represent groups or communities who do not conform to the mainstream values and patterns of the “dominant” group or groups in your society? Does this occur because they are innately incapable of learning? Or is the educational system failing a large proportion of our students? What are the mechanisms behind this failure to meet the needs of all our children and youth?

Children come to school with different life experiences and expectations, the worlds in which they live do not support the same beliefs and attitudes nor do they emphasize the same skills (See Modules 2 & 4). Unfortunately, when these differ from those valued at school, they are usually penalised through the assessment and evaluation procedures, as well as through other dimensions of the school organisation (Module 7), or the teaching strategies used (Module 8).

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<sup>3</sup> Rosenthal, R., and Jacobson, L. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom: Teacher expectation and pupils' intellectual development*. New York:

Rinehart and Winston. For a synthesis on the book, see History of Education: Selected Moments of the 20th Century by Daniel Schugurensky, at [http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel\\_schugurensky/assignment1/1968rosenjacob.html](http://fcis.oise.utoronto.ca/~daniel_schugurensky/assignment1/1968rosenjacob.html)



**“So that evaluation is fair, all of you are going to perform the same test: you have to climb that tree”**

Very often teachers use the same evaluation criteria for all students, demanding the same tasks from all of them regardless of their characteristics, background or initial conditions (e.g. language, expectations regarding school, previous experiences, etc.). We evaluate and assess them in a similar way: the same exams, the same tests for all students. As stated in the vignette, the aim is to give all of them a fair treatment, but it also reflects graphically that in fact this is not the fairest treatment at all. Let us think about the audacious little fish, the seal, the elephant... - with self-determination, according to the current educational discourse in many countries - they should be able to climb the tree if they have worked hard enough. If this is utterly impossible due to their physical characteristics, a frequent alternative to justify their inability to succeed is to consider them disabled: thus they would be exempted from performing this test, as their physical conditions and abilities do not allow them to climb the tree.

No consideration is given to the fact that they are all simply *different*, and that the test has been designed only for those who are potentially able to climb it (regardless of the usefulness of this objective), who are thus regarded as the ‘norm’, the standard against which all other subjects are compared. Those who are not able to climb it are either disabled or lazy students. Their differences are not considered an asset. This is an over-exaggerated example of this situation, but which can easily be transferred to a regular classroom, where all children are different (See Module 2). These differences, however, are either seen in a negative way, or not even taken into account. Evaluation is usually planned differently in the case of students with special needs. However, this should be done for all students at the compulsory educational level, taking care not to lower the standards, and making sure that all students have a real opportunity to develop their own

potential. Maintaining high expectations and standards of excellence for every student is essential. The goals of compulsory education, discussed in Module 1, should be present in the assessment of children and the evaluation of the teaching and learning process.

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**Have you, as a student, ever been evaluated differently from your fellow class members?**

**What was the reason? How was it done? How did you feel about it?**

**What were the consequences?**

**And now, as a teacher, have you ever thought of evaluating your students in different ways?**

**Which students, all or only some of them?**

**Is evaluation carried out in accordance with the objectives set at the beginning of the term, the lesson, etc.?**

**Are these objectives meaningful to all students?**

In the former selected texts and vignettes, the main focus is placed on the students' assessment. However, in this module we will also consider the evaluation of other essential aspects, rarely taken into account, such as the teaching process or the school structural factors, aspects which are dealt with more in depth in Modules 7 & 8.



## Information

Evaluation of the teaching and learning process is one of the most important elements to ensure quality in education and is in turn influenced by our conception of education. The enhancement of the whole educational process should be the basis of evaluation, analysing its key aspects and making the necessary adjustments when discrepancies are found in relation to the desired situation.

However, this overall purpose is often forgotten. The results of external evaluations of the educational system seem to fall upon deaf ears; they are usually reported in a superficial way, there is no feed-back and they do not have an impact on the transformation of current practices and policies. Internal evaluations, which are less frequent, usually follow the same pattern, unless they are carried out jointly with the school staff, under previously agreed, clear and flexible criteria. Thus, committed teachers can work co-operatively towards the improvement of the teaching and learning process by looking at their own practice from different perspectives and seeking ways to enhance it.

We will try to address in this module some questions about the role and functions of evaluation, who, what, how and when to evaluate. Teachers and teaching practices are seldom subject to evaluation, students are generally the only objects of it. And they are usually evaluated or assessed mainly considering their ability to remember and repeat certain conceptual contents. Other contents related to skills and attitudes are not rated as important. We usually assess learning that is de-contextualised from any concrete and meaningful situation.

Moreover, assessment of students' abilities is often too frequently based on a subjective appraisal of physical appearance, behaviour in relation to others, language, and a combination of social factors which include income, parents' educational level and family structure, number of siblings, and social services received (Jackson & Cosca 1974). As we tried to illustrate in the vignette of the previous section, students who do not conform to the 'norm' are usually diagnosed with behaviour problems or learning disabilities. Differences in cultural background are often perceived by school personnel in terms of deficiency or pathology (Axelson 1999:226). For instance, lack of competence in the official language of the school is considered a language 'deficit' and is often associated with a cognitive deficit (in general, language differences are viewed as deficits).

Although few teachers deliberately or consciously discriminate against students on the basis of their socio-cultural characteristics, it is true that in many cases their behaviour and ways of addressing children from diverse backgrounds is discriminating, even if unconsciously or unintentionally. Teachers hold pre-conceived notions and ideas on the behaviour patterns and degrees of ability of different 'categories' of children. These

stereotypes (with reference to social status, gender, nationality, ethnic group, etc.) influence not only teachers' attitudes and behaviour, but also the curriculum contents, teaching styles, and assessment and evaluation procedures. Selection and segregation of students are some of the consequences of evaluation, as well as school failure, which could be avoided thus changing many of our practices in school. This is why it is so important to reflect critically on our assessment and evaluation procedures, trying to carry them out in a more equitable way.

## The role of evaluation

### What are the functions of evaluation?

### What are its objectives and consequences?

The educational system is part of a wider system – namely, society as a whole-, which to a large extent determines the functions of evaluation through ideological and axiological implications. These functions are not always made explicit, there is a “dark side” to evaluation, which is latent or assumed as natural, allegedly devoid of any subjective judgements. However, it is not really neutral, just as there is no neutral education. Evaluation seems to respond to social demands of knowledge accreditation, selection, classification and control of individuals and schools themselves. As Tomlinson contends (1994), educational systems act as a selection mechanism from the moment they establish the type and amount of knowledge and skills students must master. The criteria used to assess this knowledge are of great importance, as they will determine the degree of acquisition of these skills and the qualifications required in order to access higher education, the world of work, and vocational education.

If evaluation in compulsory schooling serves as a mechanism of selection and classification, it constitutes an anti-social practice. The only way to counteract this, as well as the control function, is to democratise the relationships in education, to promote active participation of all those directly affected by the evaluation process (students, teachers, school staff, parents, the community) and enable them to take part in the subsequent decision making. Evaluation should serve to inform and enhance the teaching and learning process, by identifying and meeting specific needs, providing feed-back on teaching strategies and on learning process and outcomes, making the necessary adjustments on time; in summary, it should serve a constructive and positive purpose, rather than serving merely as a means of accreditation, selection or control.

The outcomes of assessment and evaluation can lead to different consequences, depending on their intention, how they are used and on the procedures followed. They are at the basis of relevant decisions made in school, such as the following:

*a) Tracking and/or grouping*

One of the consequences of evaluation is to segregate students who cannot follow the regular classes, or who are not achieving the minimum objectives required, by means of alternative options. In some cases, they are placed in special education classes, or in special programmes aimed at providing basic educational qualifications to students who will not pursue further education after the compulsory level. They can also be provided with additional support by special teachers, sometimes within the ordinary classroom but most frequently outside it. There are many examples of these types of specific programmes: compensatory education, “linking” classrooms (*aulas de enlace*, provisional classrooms to group immigrant students with no “good” knowledge of school language), support groups, etc. They usually lead to the labelling of the children who attend these programmes, and to further segregation from their ‘mainstream’ peers.

From an intercultural perspective, and being aware that it is not easy at all, it would be necessary to find other ways of supporting these students, in a more inclusive way, providing them with the same opportunities to work together with their peers in the regular classroom. Efforts should be made to create a learning environment within the mainstream class where all children fit and are given the opportunity to develop their potential. If, nonetheless, separation occurs, opportunities for interaction with the mainstream group should be ensured.

*b) Student's promotion decisions*

One of the basic functions of evaluation is to decide about the promotion of students to the next grade. Normally, there are two possible options: a) to consider the attainment of the proposed objectives as a criterion for promotion; or b) to automatically promote students even if they have failed to achieve the minimum objectives required. The first option is intended to make all students reach the same objectives at the same time. The second one is based on the awareness of children's different learning styles and rhythms, and tries to adapt teaching processes to students' needs. But in order to successfully implement the second option, it is crucial to make essential changes on the whole teaching and learning process, making the necessary adjustments to avoid the continuous failing of students.

*c) Improvement decisions*

The improvement of the teaching and learning process should be one of the main aims of evaluation in education. It implies analysing the process to find out what is working correctly and what is not, according to the goals education (see Module 1) and what we consider best regarding teaching and learning (see Module 4). The following sections will address more specifically what, whom and how to evaluate in order to help improve our practice from an intercultural perspective.



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**As a teacher, who do you usually evaluate?**

**Are you ever subject to evaluation or assessment?**

**Does your school carry out regular evaluations / assessments of its structural dimensions, procedures, staff, etc.?**

**Do you evaluate your own practice regularly?**

**For instance, the methodology and strategies that you use in class, whether they are appropriate or not with all your students, co-ordination with other teachers, etc... If so, how do you do it?**

Formal assessment with a set of established criteria; informally, according to your own judgement as you go along, peer evaluation...

Evaluation is usually focused exclusively on the results of learning – the assessment of achievement outcomes-, rather than on the process, and moreover, it tends to emphasise conceptual knowledge over other aspects. But besides the learners, we also have to pay attention to the teachers and other school staff (i.e. guidance practitioners), their teaching styles and strategies or the evaluation and assessment procedures. It is also necessary to keep in mind other structural dimensions, such as school-family links, relations with the community, school organisational variables, etc., which are addressed in Modules 3 & 7.

We can thus distinguish between different levels or objects of evaluation: the students' learning (assessment), the teaching-learning process (or evaluation of the teacher), and the school (evaluation of the school as a whole).

Evaluation agents should be the same as those involved in the teaching-learning process. Teachers and pupils (at least) play a pivotal role in the evaluation process: they can evaluate themselves, evaluate each other and evaluate the teaching process. Evaluation as "a process of systematic assessment of an element in order to make decisions on improvement" makes full sense if all those involved are able to contribute to the enhancement of the process and participate in important decisions which will make learning more meaningful for all students. Parents or other influential members of the community should also be engaged in this process.

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**Have you ever been evaluated by your students?**

**Did you take into account the information obtained? How?**

**In case you have never been evaluated this way, why have you not promoted it?**

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Let us now focus on *what* to evaluate, depending on the object of evaluation: teachers, centres, students etc. We should bear in mind that any choice we make will be influ-

enced by our conceptual framework, in this case regarding the goals of education and what we consider important in the teaching-learning process.

- ***What to evaluate in relation to teachers and school centres?***

Many teachers, even though aware of the need to change or improve their practices (using cooperative learning as a strategy, working in coordination with their colleagues, collaborating with the families, etc.), stick to traditional or conventional ways of teaching. A certain disillusionment with the system or even disappointment in the students, lack of motivation or interest, personal reasons, pressures, etc., cause some teachers to “shut” themselves off inside their own classroom. To break this tendency, joint actions and initiatives should be promoted among the staff to encourage critical and positive attitudes towards the continuing improvement of teaching practices.

Groundless or unfounded fears regarding evaluation of our work must be avoided. As education professionals we must comply with our client's needs, as well as with our own needs. Listening to the students and their families is a very useful strategy to find out what we can change and improve. We have to increase our ability to handle the uncertainty and the ambiguity. Additionally we must be willing to change, to do it better.

Other aspects to be evaluated within the classroom are the text-books and materials used, the curriculum contents (in relation to their implementation and assessment), the relationships among peers and between students and teachers, plus any other issues which affect the learning process (see Module 8). Outside the classroom, variables such as resources allocated, curriculum (as stated at national, regional or local levels), classroom and school organisation (see Module 7), promotion strategies, assessment and evaluation criteria, staff selection procedures, coordination among teachers, links with the family and the community (see Module 3), among others, are aspects which have a great impact on the teaching-learning process and on the ultimate achievement of our students.

**It is necessary to clarify the basic criteria to evaluate all these aspects. We recommend that you review the modules on school structure and organisation and on teaching and learning strategies (See modules 7 and 8).**

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After reading modules 7 and 8, try to define in cooperation with other colleagues some criteria to evaluate your own teaching practices and other dimensions in the school centre.

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- ***What to evaluate in relation with students?***

Assessment and teaching should go together; in this sense our evaluation' criteria should be determined by the educational objectives that we consider essential. Contents have to be accessible to students (Module 8) and the assessment criteria made clear at the start, so that they know how they are going to be evaluated. When we decide on the contents to be assessed, we are making a choice based on our conceptual background. From an intercultural perspective, we must bear in mind that knowledge is constructed in

different ways by societies and groups, and this should be taken into account when selecting assessment criteria and procedures.

The knowledge and experience children bring to school varies according to their background and it accounts for some of the ways in which they interpret tasks and communicate thoughts. It is thus very important for teachers to be aware of the different ways in which the same facts or problems can be approached. As Stourman & Francis (1994) state, if we concentrate too much on looking for the 'correct' explanations we can easily miss the child who comes at the problem from an unusual angle.

The emphasis placed on verbal components in the assessment process can also lead us to overlook ways in which a child is demonstrating understanding of knowledge, besides the fact that those students who are not fluent in the official language/s of the school will not perform appropriately. If the school values the variety of knowledge and experience children bring with them, it will be more likely to be taken into account when the curriculum is planned.

"The most helpful distinction in my mind between a record that is useful and one that is not is to look at whether it records learning as a process or whether it just records isolated task achievement. This is not just a question of formative versus summative assessment. Whether as parent or teacher, I find most useful and exciting those observations which tell me **how** the child learnt something, **how** the child demonstrated progress in scientific or linguistic or mathematical understanding. No tick in a box against a standardised statement will ever do this. Only a record which is an observational record with narrative comment will"

(Burgess-Macey, 1994; p. 47<sup>4</sup>)

This quote clearly reflects the relevance of focusing on the process rather than on the outcomes of learning; and the usefulness of records, such as those used by early years practitioners, in helping the teacher understand and plan for children's progress. The portfolio assessment (see Activity 5, and the Resources section) is very useful to keep such a record.

Educational objectives encompass much more than the mere acquisition of conceptual knowledge. Attitudes, skills, procedures (formulating a problem, interpreting a chart), critical thinking, reasoning, work habits, values, are all part of what is taught at school, and should be taken into account when assessing learning. Assessment should not be limited to tests which tell us what the child has learnt in a mechanical way, usually by memorising contents and repeating them (or choosing the correct option), or even worse which focus on what the student does *not know*.

Moreover, the aim of assessment should not be merely that of giving grades to students to show or record their achievements. There is no use in giving the student a mark, and letting the gaps in their learning process go unattended. Assessment should reflect in a constructive way what the child is really learning, what he/she is capable of, and when we identify things he/she has not learnt, the assessment outcomes should help us to

<sup>4</sup>Burgess-Macey, C. (1994). Assessing young children's learning. In Keel, P. (ed.) *Assessment in the Multi-ethnic Primary classroom*. London, Trentham Books

ensure that this is taken care of, if necessary modifying our teaching strategies so that the child can achieve the desired objectives.

Statements of Attainment as defined by National Curricula (e.g. in the U.K, Spain, etc.) or any control list used in the assessment of students do not necessarily reflect the ways individual children learn, nor the sequence in which they do so. They do not give us a complete picture of the process undertaken by the student in elaborating the information. The same issues can be raised in relation to standardised tests.

**What criteria do you use to assess and evaluate your students?**

**Are these criteria clear for all students?**

**Which type of objectives and contents do you emphasise?**

**Do you evaluate the process of tasks carried out by students, as well as the outcomes?**

**Interview some potential teachers in training and try to find out which are their criteria to evaluate students.**

**Do they take into account different kinds of contents (attitudes, skills and concepts) when evaluating them?**

**If they highlight only conceptual knowledge, help them see the need of considering all kinds of objectives, not only the conceptual ones; all of them must be balanced and taken into account for the final evaluation.**

**You can continue the interview asking the following questions, or you can respond to them yourself:**

**How do you define achievement?**

**What are the consequences of school grades for the student?**

**Can a student having a good attitude and a collaborative behaviour but without having a good command of the contents in a certain subject “pass”?**

**What are the difficulties and pressures you find in relation to evaluation?**

**How do you tackle them?**

## **How and when to evaluate**

Evaluation can be carried out prior to, during and at the end of the teaching and learning process: all of these stages are important, although from an intercultural perspective the first two are considered essential.

Evaluating our own practice and assessing students at the start of the teaching process is necessary to know where we stand. The construction of meaningful learning must be based on what the students actually know, and on their own awareness of their previous

knowledge. This pre-evaluation can be carried out in different ways, not only by means of standardised tests. Other qualitative methods, based on dialogue, observation, reflection, peer tutoring and mutual assessment between teachers and students, are very useful to assess the teaching and learning process and to provide feed-back in relation to needs or gaps.

Moreover, process-based activities are more likely than pencil and paper tests to demonstrate what children know and what they are able to do, even though they are at first more difficult to design. It is necessary to devise activities that show us *how* the children learn, as well as *what* they have learnt. As Sturman and Francis (1994) state:

“If we don’t provide activities with rich potential assessment opportunities we won’t be able to make full and fair assessments of the children” (p. 72)

The following recommendations (Aguado, 2003) should help to ensure that evaluation is not merely summative, serving a function of accreditation or selection:

- Grades or marks should not be given to everything the student produces. Essays, oral activities, work done in collaboration with peers should be assessed and supervised without a grade being awarded.
- Written assignments. Avoid putting a mark on the first drafts of essays or term papers. It should be done when the student is finally satisfied with his/her work.
- Criteria. Make the evaluation criteria clear from the beginning. Students should know from the start what is expected of them to obtain good grades. Discuss with them what makes a good assignment, and explain what would be considered unacceptable.
- Self-evaluation. As much as possible, students should be allowed to evaluate their own work according to the established criteria.
- Personal discussions. A few minutes should be spent with every child to discuss personally the tasks fulfilled and the outcomes. The most important purpose of evaluation is to assess and support their work and inform their development, not to judge their errors.
- Written communication with the parents. Inform them about their children’s progress and activities. Use the family’s language (engage the help of someone who speaks/writes it if you don’t).
- Emphasize positive aspects. Focus attention on achievements, on what the student has accomplished, carried out, learned, improved, regardless of mistakes or gaps.

Other useful suggestions are those identified by Axelson (1999), both in the evaluation of students and in the promotion of positive inter-group relations:

- Introduce new norms of intelligence and achievement by emphasizing multiple intellectual abilities in addition to reading, writing, and computing skills. Logic, problem solving, creativity, expression of ideas, leadership, and cooperation are other areas in which students can take pride.

- 
- Work against the self-fulfilling prophecy that minority children will fail and work for the success of *all* children.
  - Keep children mixed in as many activities as possible.
  - When children are segregated into bilingual or other programmes, allow for activities in which different children can mix, work, or interact together.
- 

**Do you bear in mind the three stages of evaluation above mentioned?**

**Which of them do you consider to be more important?**

**Why? How do you assess in each of them?**

**Which are the consequences?**

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After reading the recommendations for evaluation made in this section, point out those things you normally do, and those that you don't. If there are few of these things you usually do, try to be modify your evaluation and assessment practice by following some of these recommendations in the future. You might not see immediate results, but by taking these into account you will probably make a big difference for the children being assessed.

Go to the Resources section on Alternative and Formative assessment. Check the website suggested there and find out which methods you can use in your practice, bearing in mind what has been discussed in this information section.



## activities and suggestions

### ACTIVITY 1. Appearances can be deceptive. Talk to your students

As we have seen in the information section, the evaluation of our students' abilities is frequently based on external aspects such as physical appearance, behaviour, language competence, etc. We are influenced, even if it is sometimes hard to accept, by appearances. With this activity we want to help you to better know your students and their families. Think about a particular student whom you judged in a certain way at the beginning of the school year. Explain briefly how your perception of that student has changed throughout the year, and comment how this has affected your practice, if at all.

Interview some of your students and try to identify the pre-conceived ideas you have about them. Ask about their interests, how they see themselves in the future, how they feel at school, how do they get on with other students, what difficulties they experience at school, what do they like, etc. Has your perception changed after the interview? Do you now know more about them than before? How will this knowledge influence your practice?

In order to raise our expectations and achieve a better understanding of our students, it is important that you talk to them about the things they are interested in, to try to get to know them better. You, as a teacher, will be surprised. Your relationship with the students will be different, and your teaching practices will probably improve when you strive to meet your students' interests.

### ACTIVITY 2. Decisions that mark

In the middle of the course, Jose, a student from Santo Domingo, joins the class. His academic level does not correspond to the level required for his age. He can't read properly and he hasn't acquired the basic concepts in mathematics. During the lessons, this student is seated at the back of the classroom, with a female student who is in a similar situation. At frequent intervals, according to a timetable agreed by the teachers, these two students go to compensatory education classes, where they work individually on the basic instrumental skills in language and mathematics. Their participation in the activities of the mainstream class is usually very low, as well as their useful work time, which is spent in drawing or doing mechanical literacy activities (today we work on the Spanish words that begin with pra-, pre-, pri-, pro- pru- ).

Situations like the former are probably not unknown to you. Why are these decisions made? We do not question the need to give this additional school support, what we question is *the way* in which it is given.

Think of these two students, or observe carefully others who are in a similar situation. How do they feel? How do they progress in their learning process? How do they value the support they are receiving? What kind of support would better fit the intercultural approach?

### **ACTIVITY 3. Looking at the students' capacities from a different perspective**

If we ask you, as a teacher, what you think about the learning potential of people in general, you would probably give us an optimistic answer. As learnt in our training and from a theoretical and even philosophical point, we could say that everybody has a high learning potential. As professionals of education, we have (or should have) high expectations regarding people's developmental and learning processes.

But there comes a time when these expectations begin to change in practice. In a system where this is not the usual belief, where high expectations are not held with regard to all students, we are stripped from our optimistic vision and we forget about this learning potential. This can happen also when we encounter difficult situations, or students who are not achieving appropriately (and the system goes unchallenged).

The way we assess students is greatly influenced by our beliefs in the learning potential of students, and how we approach the learning process. Reflect on the following example, taken from an interview to a group of in-service teachers:

"We were totally convinced that that student, whom we will never forget, would not be able to learn more than what she/he already had. We could tell what s/he didn't know at a glance. We knew this student could not add, could not conjugate verbs, had difficulties in locating a country in a map, etc. However, this student was capable of doing many other things which we had not taken into account in our assessment. By focusing only on those measurable objectives defined in a control list, we were leaving out a great deal of potential".

#### **Have you had a similar experience?**

So, instead of stressing the negative, the gaps, let us put the emphasis on the positive: what do we know about what our students *can* do? To look at our students' potential means precisely that: to look at their strengths and capacities, i.e., the things they are "able to do". This is not as easy as knowing what they are not able to do.

To focus on what the student can do, we will ask a good psychologist (Vygotsky) for help. Following the logical sequence of the content we teach (we need to learn the concept of 'number' before learning to add, addition before multiplication, etc.), let's have a look at what the student knows and can do. The steps might be the following:



- Prepare a brief evaluation scale to assess the students' initial level. Let us forget what they don't know, and let us try to discover what they do know already. We can prepare a conceptual or mental map with the students' capacities.
- Suggest concrete activities which can help us to evaluate each of the criteria.
- Finally, starting from this idea of 'step by step' teaching (which has its risks, but we will forget them for the time being), we have to plan how to teach it.

We should not forget Vygotsky's critique of Piaget's developmental stages, focused on what students can do on their own, once they have reached the proper stage corresponding to their age. Vygotsky looked at students' potential from another perspective, using the concept of 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD) defined as:

"the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined by problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers"

(Vygotsky, 1978:86)

We ask you to do so as well: look at what the students can do with the help of other students; it will be much more than what they can do on their own. Besides assessing what students can do on their own and what they can do with help, by means of the ZPD we can also focus on what the learner can do next (proximal), so that we know the way to go forward, the next step the student has to take; bearing in mind that she/he doesn't need to do it alone.

#### **ACTIVITY 4. Let your students know where you stand (make teaching and assessment objectives clear from the start)**

Even though some students may very easily find out what is expected from them in class (e.g. proper behaviour), or in an exam (what are the "tricks" to pass), the truth is that many other students do not know the rules of the game, and do not know what they are being asked; so it is more difficult for them to fit into our demands. Let us give everybody the chance to learn, by letting them all participate in the process from the beginning, and by not reducing our assessment solely to written exams.

If we make our educational objectives explicit at the beginning of the term or the school year, students will know what to expect from the start. This is especially useful and necessary when new students come to the class once the term has started. What we are going to teach is supposedly what we are going to assess. We can even go further and negotiate the objectives, the contents, the assessment criteria. This will raise students' implication in the teaching-learning process and their motivation to achieve the established objectives.

Think about:

- Different ways of firming up the objectives in each class you teach, if possible in collaboration with the students themselves.

- How to relate those objectives to more general ones and to the concrete experiences of your students.
- The contents to teach, breaking them down so they are accessible to all students, and establishing priorities (are all contents equally important?). See Modules 4 & 8.

At the beginning of each class, make explicit the objectives to pursue and the contents to be taught. Observe whether there is any change in the progress of the class and in the results the students obtain.

### ACTIVITY 5. Portfolio: assessing students' work

Look at the following website and others you will find in the 'Resources' section in this module. Describe what a portfolio is, consider its advantages and disadvantages. Use it in your own practice and describe how it works.

**Portfolio:** <http://www.etni.org.il/ministry/portfolio/default.html>

Definition: "A purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of student self-reflection."

(Paulson, Paulson, Meyer 1991)

In this way a portfolio is a living, growing collection of a students work - each addition is carefully selected by the student for a specific reason which s/he will explain. The overall purpose of the portfolio is to enable the student to demonstrate to others her/his progress in learning. The greatest value of portfolios is that, in building them, students become active participants in the learning process and its assessment.

### ACTIVITY 6.- Read carefully the following text by Miguel Ángel Santos Guerra<sup>5</sup>

"Reducing the evaluation of a school centre to the reliance on academic results of its students implies a great simplification. If the *bright, outstanding* students have also learned at school how to become oppressive, unsupportive people, the school should worry for having given them so many weapons...

School centres have a social mission to reach, and their evaluation cannot be reduced to the mere accounting of passes and failures"

Discuss, in small groups, or with other colleagues, the following questions:

- What kind of things are being evaluated at school? Is there an actual relationship between what is programmed as an objective by the school (*Educational*

<sup>5</sup> Santos Guerra, M.A. (1990). *Hacer visible lo cotidiano* (=Making visible the everyday life). Madrid: Akal.

*Project*) and what is evaluated? Are there any other aspects that should be evaluated?

- What are the usual features of a “bright” student? What defines them?
- What type of information is provided with the “passes” and “failures”? Whom is this information relevant to? What kind of reinforcing measures does the school offer to those who have failed? What is on offer for those who have passed?

**ACTIVITY 7. Analyse the following “Dysfunctions of evaluation”  
proposed by Blanco Prieto<sup>6</sup>**

1. Evaluation implies only evaluation of conceptual contents.
2. The student is ‘responsible’ for his/her failure.
3. Only the student has to be evaluated.
4. Evaluation is carried out only on an outcome basis (evaluation of results).
5. Evaluation must put the focus on identifying the lack of knowledge of students.
6. Evaluation is reduced to a mark.
7. Exams are the main instruments to evaluate.
8. Evaluation is normative.
9. Evaluation is selective.
10. Evaluation is the end of the process.
11. Self-evaluation is not in use.
12. The teacher is the main agent of evaluation.
13. Evaluation promotes conservative practices.
14. Evaluation may be used as a repressive tool.
15. Meta-evaluation is not in use.
16. Continuous evaluation is not in use.

Analyse the evaluation process you usually carry out in your own teaching practice. Identify alternative evaluation methods to the “dysfunctions” mentioned above. Considering evaluation from a formative perspective, what kind of advantages do you think it has for teachers and also for students?

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<sup>6</sup> Blanco Prieto, F.(1996). *La evaluación en la educación secundaria* (=Evaluation in Secondary Education). Salamanca, Amarú.



## proposals for collaboration

### **PROPOSAL 1. Appearances create expectations**

This proposal is linked to Activity 1 in the previous section. We want you to reflect about the expectations that appearances and prejudices (sometimes based on very little information) create: expectations about students potential, and actions derived from those expectations, such as our way of interacting with students, the place we sit them in the classroom, ... .

Ask a colleague to enter your classroom and observe your work during several days. The focus should be on how your previous ideas about the students and your practices in the classroom influence your students. Tell the observer what you think about your students, why you do what you do in the classroom. Think about changes to make so that prejudices will not lead to exclusion.

### **PROPOSAL 2.- Talking about our work: a discussion group with teachers and pupils**

The teacher will create a discussion group about evaluation and/or assessment: what is being evaluated, what should be evaluated, how, why, what for,... Depending on his/her situation (working, training) and interests, the teacher can prepare a questionnaire about evaluation/assessment, with some relevant questions (students' assessment, evaluation of the teaching process ...). The teacher will then choose some people (other teachers and students), and establish a discussion for one hour or so. Afterwards, he/she will make a report with the information obtained and analysed. He/she can ask participants (and also answer them) some questions like: what have you learnt in this activity? What changes would you introduce into the evaluation that you have observed is being done?

The same activity can be turned into interviews instead of creating a discussion group.

### PROPOSAL 3. Balancing educational objectives in the evaluation process

Think about some of the strategies which you could apply to evaluate different types of educational aims (conceptual knowledge, skills, attitudes) granting the same importance to all of them. If you are a teacher in service, try to reach a consensus on this with the other members of the staff; if you are in training, look for different alternatives working together with other students.

Interview some in-service teachers and find which are the evaluation criteria they are applying to assess the different educational objectives (conceptual contents, processes, attitudes).

- Do their criteria really consider different kind of objectives?
- Are these different objectives equally considered when evaluating?
- Do they consider some of these objectives more important than others? Why?
- Which are the difficulties or pressures they usually find in evaluating these different objectives?

(A similar activity was proposed as reflection activity within the information section, but some of the questions differ).

### PROPOSAL 4. Looking at ourselves in the mirror of our students

This time our students will evaluate our own teaching. Suggest this activity to the students, give them time to prepare an evaluation questionnaire with different items according to their own criteria (how you teach, your attitudes toward the students, relationships, how you assess their learning, what could be changed ...). Let the students respond to each item, and promote a discussion with the whole class. You should explain why you do certain things in the class, accept to change others, etc. Reach a commitment with the students to work towards improvement of your practice, and their own work in class.

### PROPOSAL 5.- The students evaluate themselves

Let us value what students think about their own learning process. You can use different strategies: individual self assessment (marking) of an assignment (it could be complemented with an interview with the student); cooperative assessment after a cooperative assignment; etc. It is important that students do not focus only on the results, they should evaluate the process as well: How have they learned? What difficulties did they find? How did they solve them? Ask them to propose assessment activities which evidence what they have really learnt.



## planning and adapting curriculum

Evaluate a group of students by means of an exam, and reflect on the following questions:

- How can the exam provide me with information on the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the student?
- Can this exam entitle me to evaluate the student's competence on the subject?
- In which sense may the exam become useful for the teacher and also for the student?

Share the results with the students and analyse how this information is understood and interpreted by the group, bearing in mind the former questions. Compare their comments with your own conclusions.

2- Develop a real lesson on the subject you prefer, including objectives regarding conceptual contents, skills and attitudes. Think of different evaluation strategies to assess each one of these objectives. How relevant to you is each one of them in deciding the final mark of the students? The intention is to reflect on the idea that "education is more than learning conceptual contents".

3- Analyse the evaluation criteria and methodology proposed in the official curriculum of your country. Is there any specific reference to students' assessment? What kind of evaluation is proposed? What are the intentions - explicit or hidden - of the evaluation criteria? What type of education is promoted?



## specific resources and additional links

### European evaluation databases

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#### **PISA: The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment**

<http://www.pisa.oecd.org/>

An OECD programme for international student assessment which aims to find out the status of students' knowledge and skills. Although interesting as a comparative study, equity issues in relation to the methodology and the contents assessed should be raised.

Are students well prepared to meet the challenges of the future? Are they able to analyse, reason and communicate their ideas effectively? Do they have the capacity to continue learning throughout life? These are questions that parents, students, the public and those who run education systems continually ask.

PISA, a new three-yearly survey of the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds in the principal industrialised countries, provides some answers. It assesses how far students near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society. It presents evidence on student performance in reading, mathematical and scientific literacy, reveals factors that influence the development of these skills at home and at school, and examines what the implications are for policy development".

#### **EURYDICE**

##### **Evaluation of schools providing compulsory education in Europe**

<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/EvalS/en/FrameSet.htm>

Eurydice.org is an interesting data base that addresses European educational systems in relation to all its elements: teachers, pupils, curricula, and so forth... In this case, Eurydice focuses on both external and internal methods and procedures for evaluating schools.

The evaluation of education systems and schools is assuming major significance in ensuring quality education for all at a time when decentralisation is becoming increasingly widespread in Europe, whether in relation to the management of staff, resources or aspects of education in its own right. Focused on the evaluation, as entities, of schools that provide compulsory education, this study describes the situation in 2000/01 in the countries covered by the Network. Besides situating this specific type of evaluation with respect to overall arrangements for evaluating education (evaluation of the education sys-

tem, teachers, etc.), Eurydice compares both external and internal methods and procedures for evaluating schools.

Who are the people involved in these different types of evaluation and how have they been trained? In what ways are internal and external evaluation related and how is each form of evaluation organised? What are the aims, criteria and procedures of evaluation and what use is made of its findings?"

### **Approaches and Criteria**

[http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/EvalS/files/Evaluation\\_EN.pdf](http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/EvalS/files/Evaluation_EN.pdf)

Eurydice document updated on 21 April 2004

Involves both internal and external approaches and criteria of evaluation, procedures and use of the results, as well as some recommendations for evaluators.

## **Regarding a Portfolio**

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### **GUIDELINES FOR PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT IN TEACHING ENGLISH**

<http://www.etni.org.il/ministry/portfolio/default.html>

It is important here to understand the concept and reason of the portfolio as *"A purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of student self-reflection."*, its elements, and implementation procedures as well, adapted to English Language teaching-learning.

#### **Prince George's County community. Portfolio assessment**

<http://www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us/~elc/portfolio.html>

Together with definition, use and construction of portfolios, as a way of output learning processes, the page includes interesting information about learning theories and strategies.

#### **EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTRE "ERIC"**

[http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC\\_Digests/ed388890.html](http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed388890.html)

A portfolio as purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of student achievement or growth is not folders of all the work a student does.

This document explores the instructional, assessments uses, certification of competence and guideline of tracking of development of all the students over their school experience.



## About formative, alternative assessment

Alternative and formative assessment as “an umbrella for anything other than standardized, multiple choice questions. Examples include short answer response and extended response, observation, individual or group performance assessment, and portfolios” is discussed within recent pedagogical development. These are two examples of this matter, edited at ERIC.

[http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC\\_Digests/ed470206.html](http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed470206.html)

**The Concept of Formative Assessment. ERIC Digest.**

**EAC East Resource List**

Using Alternative Assessment with English Language Learners

<http://www.gwu.edu/~eaceast/reslist/alter.html>

Document about **alternative assessment** with English **Language** Learners

## Specific Intercultural Assessments

Working with the intercultural aspect

[http://www.fba.uu.se/portfolio/portfolio\\_en/pf7.htm](http://www.fba.uu.se/portfolio/portfolio_en/pf7.htm)

Intercultural communicative competence assessment is fully necessary as an essential aspect of citizenship learning. This case points out language competence. “Language competence in this perspective becomes a means to intercultural communication rather than an end in itself”. The page includes a set of 22 competence questions, for instance, thinking about reciprocal representations, stereotypes, perceived commonalities and differences of people belonging some nationalities, etc. The mentioned nationalities are Swedish, British and North American ones, but I think it is possible to implement in a broader context.

**European Language Portfolio. The intercultural component and Learning how to learn. European Council**

[http://www.tcd.ie/CLCS/portfolio/ELP\\_network/Intercultural\\_LHTLTemplates.pdf](http://www.tcd.ie/CLCS/portfolio/ELP_network/Intercultural_LHTLTemplates.pdf)

PDF document, in which the role of language assessment toward a European intercultural community is discussed. Within an intercultural framework languages appear to play an important role in Europe due to the great diversity, not only between Nation States, but also within them.



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## school structure and organisation

The main aims of this module are:

- to make explicit our mental images about schools
- to reflect about the main dimensions in school organization
- to elaborate on the practical implications in order to build an Intercultural school



## to start thinking

Imagine a school, any school. Take, for instance, the one you knew as a student, the one you know as a teacher. What is it like? We can describe the climate, the structure of this school as a metaphor or mental image and become aware that we do not work for school systems. We work for our perception of them. These perceptions are mental models that influence the ways in which people act in the school and the ways in which they interpret what happens. We can perceive the school as a machine, a living organism, a brain, a political system, a psychic prison, a puzzle, flux and transformation, domination,... (Morgan, 1997).

Let us describe different schools and analyse the different mental models they represent:

### School #1

Inside the building, on the school walls there are plenty of images and posters in two languages (the school is participating in an innovative bilingual programme). The building is small and full of natural light with a huge central square that is used as gymnasium and community events room. There is a large and artistic painting on the entrance level. The director's office is full of papers and posters. They display the teacher timetable, extra schooling activities, notices for parents, advertisements about lunch, catering and administrative information.

We observe many differences between classrooms when comparing the decoration, the chairs and tables distribution, the atmosphere itself. The pre-school classrooms are, generally full of paintings, organized on corner activities, the chairs are grouped. In the first grade the tables are placed around the teacher desk. In the sixth grade the classrooms are more serious and empty of decorative objects with the exception of several murals developed by students and teachers. They are about appropriate behaviour in the school, about the family pets, and Spanish maps. Every student table is isolated, placed separately and oriented toward the teachers desk.

At nine o'clock the bell sounds and sixth grade pupils come into their classrooms in line following their tutor teacher. They sit down and the teacher announces that they are going to check the last weeks exam. The teacher is answering the test questions and explaining the correct answers. This activity takes 45 minutes. At that moment the bell sounds again and the students must move to the gym class. At the same time a group of ten children ( 5<sup>th</sup> grade) are seated at their tables. They are going to receive an English lesson. They are the advanced students. The rest of pupils in 5<sup>th</sup> grade have remained in their own class with the Spanish teacher. Each teacher leads his/her group of children to

the next activity. Every 45 minutes many groups of students are walking to the class where they are going to undertake the next activity. I have got lost several times trying to find them , where are the 3a students at 11:30 a.m.?

## School #2

The walls of the hall and corridors are completely covered with murals, pictures, different kind of works produced by the students of all levels. There is also a special place, close to the front door, to show photographs of the last events, festivals and celebrations and visits made by the students, as well as the announcements of forthcoming events. In the staff room, we meet some mothers working together with the director on different tasks. One of the mothers is making photocopies for a teacher; they used to collaborate and assist the school staff in different administrative works, not only in administrative ones.

Children are always placed in groups that vary throughout the academic year on the basis of various criteria; different academic levels are mixed, in such a way that in each group there is at least one pupil who can help the others, and personal affinities are also taken into account to try to avoid disturbing behaviour.

Inside the first grade classroom, students are working in groups of four children and one adult each: there are five groups, and five different adults. This is what are referred to as "interactive groups". One of the participating adults is the teacher of the group; the others are the mother of a student of another group, two volunteers coming from an Islamic women's association and a special support teacher whose official task is to assist one student with specific disabilities, who is also working in the interactive groups as a volunteer.

The sixth grade classroom seems to be divided into two different zones. In one of them, close to the windows and just in front of the teacher's table -that is one step up-, there are two rows of single students. These students are supposed not to be able to share a bench, because of their disturbing behaviour or their lack of attention. The classroom looks clean and tidy, all the rows are perfectly arranged. In from the wall, above the blackboard, there are some notices with advice such as: "Silence is the best ally of study", "Do not disturb your colleagues", "Ask your turn before speaking".



## information

When we think of an intercultural school, which is the mental model, which is the metaphor we are thinking about? To us, the intercultural school is a live organism functioning as a system, as a complex system, led by a brain and characterized by the flux and transformation of the processes involved in its growth. What does this mean? This means that the school is a complex system where different organs interact to deliver a function (to teach, to learn), to keep the school alive. The school is a brain, an organ that thinks, and learns, that analyses and makes decisions. The school is in a state of flux and transformation, it is not static, it is oriented toward change and learning (see the concept of learning on module 4).

This metaphor of school structure is the one underlying the so called “democratic schools” and “inclusive schools” (See “inclusive education” in the Glossary). The overlapping between democratic, inclusive and intercultural are evident and are explicit across this guide. At this moment, it is important to point out that the school organization is affected by factors from outside the school: the legal framework, the educational system, the role of teachers in applying these regulations, EU networking and local initiatives and continuous teacher training. The former modules have been dedicated to analyse these questions.

Now we are focusing on becoming aware of our own mental image or metaphor about school as an organization. Let us consider whether our school image exacerbates, or not, the inequalities that exist in society; whether or not it fits the needs of all our students. The next step is to move from vision to vision toward the one we like to accomplish in our school. Every organizational decision we make influences the whole school system. Every decision influences the complete school image we are building.

The following discussion is not meant to be all-inclusive but rather to provide examples of school structural dimensions that may contribute to build an intercultural school. We will focus on four dimensions : a) classification and grouping ; b) physical and timing structure; c) disciplinary policies; d) participation and roles.

### Classification and grouping

The main idea that should justify our decisions about how to group students is to guarantee their learning, to guarantee that every pupil reaches the school educational objectives. Module 1 has reflected about those objectives, which deal with developing personal competencies and guarantee a real equality of opportunity for all the students. Think about the criteria applied by school to group their students. Usually, the students are placed in different groups or classes by the family name in alphabetical order and

their chronological age. Why are these criteria to group the pupils used so frequently? What are the assumptions underlying these criteria to group students? How do they meet the different needs of the students? What kind of needs? How does this criteria of grouping take into account cultural differences?

In order to respond to individual (intellectual, cultural) differences, a common practice is tracking. Tracking is the placement of students in groups of matched ability, or homogeneous groups, within classes (e. g., school language learning groups, compensatory classes, complementary groups of teaching), or even specific programmes e.g. academic or vocational programmes at the secondary school level (e. g., special programmes for student who have failed at the “official” curriculum and are directed toward low level jobs – See Module 5). In most schools, tracking is as much a part of school as are bells and holidays. Tracking may help some high-achieving students, although the evidence is mixed (Nieto, 1992). The point being that the parents of high-achieving students are often the most reluctant to give up or challenge the policy of tracking because they perceive it as beneficial to their children.

Oakes has reported the almost exclusively negative results of this practice. She concluded that it has especially adverse effects on students already alienated by the school experience i.e. poor children, and those from linguistically and culturally diverse families. Despite the overwhelming evidence that it does not work in terms to meet the needs of diverse students, tracking is shaping the policy in most schools throughout European countries. The official policy in most countries promotes special programmes, compensatory classes for specific students.

An additional problem is the criteria used to select the students who are involved in those special programmes. Most schools do not have adequate staff to decide which students must attend the special classes. Frequently, the decision is taken which depends upon the linguistic level of the student or his/her social or cultural background (immigrant, low incomes family). As an example of this, a teacher in charge of a compensatory programme in a Spanish school told us:

In this group there are eight students, most of whom are gypsies, there is only one non-gypsy. The main advantage is that I have less number of students, and the class is more manageable. The major disadvantage is that the students in this classroom see themselves as deficient and silly.

Compensatory programmes in Spain are officially dedicated to teach basic school skills (reading, writing, maths) to the pupils who enter school with a low level in these areas. In fact, compensatory classes are full of immigrants and gypsies, as well as pupils from the lowest social class. The Czech experience is similar: additional learning help for specific students, mentoring pupils in special classes.

We propose to develop a learning environment within the mainstream class where all children fit and are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential. If separation nonetheless occurs, opportunities for interaction with the mainstream group should be ensured. We propose to delay any decision about tracking until at least the student has spent a complete academic year at school. We propose to group students in order to guarantee their learning and the recommendations exposed in module 8.

## Physical and timing structure

At the beginning of the module we have described different school scenarios including references to time and space organisation. What comments do you make about them? What mental image is proposed in those descriptions in terms of physical and timing structure? Which changes would you introduce about space and time organization? Why?

The major problem with the physical environment of many schools is that it provides a stark contrast to the stated purposes of teaching and learning. When schools are not cared for, when they become fortresses rather than an integral part of the community they serve, and when they are “holding places” instead of learning environments, the contradiction between goals and realities is a vivid one. The resemblance of some schools to factories or prisons has been mentioned more than once (Oury and Pain, 1972). This is not true of all schools, of course. The distance between some suburban schools and rural schools is sometimes clear. Can you visualise both of them? What are they like?

In 1979, **Oury and Pain** wrote:

Who defines the school building? The Ministry of National Education establishes some general prescriptions, several norms and some standard plans. Who has established these norms? Are they adequate to the user demands?...But, the users (teachers, students, parents) only appear when the school is finished....The school building is never a unique school, but the representations of a national and standard school...The architects respond to an image of school without relations with the real needs of the users....So that, what do they make? They apply the norm. The results satisfy completely to the building master. That is all.

A school perceived as a living organism, with a brain and able to promote learning by continuing flux and transformation requires adequate time and space management. It is required to respond to the needs of students and teachers. It needs to be designed and built as a place to learn and teach. At the same time, it must be seen to assume that every place at the school is a teaching – learning space: facilities to practice different sports or to engage in extracurricular activities, laboratories, study corners, or areas for informal gatherings.

The same time every moment and activity are teaching and learning moments, even in a non-conscious way. Schedules should be flexible enough to take into account the needs, routines or habits of diverse students. It is important teachers have enough time to plan different learning activities and to collaborate with colleagues, or meet and talk. Time, in particular, is the most precious of all school resources. Substantial and regularly scheduled blocks of time are needed for educators to work as small groups with common interests.

Consider the critical incident included at the beginning of this module. What comments do you wish to make about them? What mental image is promoted in those descriptions in terms of physical and timing structure? What changes would you introduce with regard to space and time organization? Why?



## Disciplinary policies

Disciplinary policies often discriminate against particular students, especially in middle and secondary schools, where they may be at odds with the developmental level of students and where they are imposed rather than negotiated. We should differentiate between the official and explicit norms and the hidden ones. The first ones use to be written in the “school behaviour code”. The second one can be made explicit by asking students: “When have you been punished/rewarded by your teachers?” Why? What form did the of punishment/reward take?

Further aggravating the problem of disciplinary policies, interpretations of student behaviour may be culturally or class biased. For example, students who keep a pick in their hair may not be doing so out of rebelliousness but simply for style or fashion. Some other children who cast their eyes downward when being scolded are not being defiant but simply behaving out of respect for their teachers, as they were taught at home. A lack of awareness of these cultural and social factors leads time and again to misinterpretations and faculty conclusions (Nieto, 1992). One of the major problems is the vague terms used in suspensions. In some schools, it was found that a disproportionate number of students suspended for being “disruptive” in class are gypsies, or black, or poor.

## Participation

Participation refers to the implication of teachers, students and their families in the developing of norms and rules regulating behaviour and discipline, as well as in other major decisions affecting school structure and processes.

### a) Students participation

Usually schools are not organized to encourage student involvement. Although students are nominally represented in the governance structure of many schools (school council, “consejo escolar”), this representation is often window dressing, which has little to do with the actual running of the school. To prepare students for a democratic life, requires that school promotes collaboration or consultation.

The fact is that students are often not involved in their own learning. What they learn is decided, designed, and executed by others. Often, it is not the teacher or the school that determines the content but the text book or something mythical... “administration”, “official curriculum”. Can you find examples in your own experience? In module 4 there are some comments about what Freire calls “banking” education, that is, a process which teachers “deposit” knowledge into students, who are seen as empty receptacles: the teacher teaches and the students are taught, the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing, the teacher thinks and the students are thought about, the teacher talks and the students listen, the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined...

One of the major consequences, especially with low-income and devalued students, is that they were further alienated from their educational experience because their heritage, home backgrounds, and life experiences were excluded from school talk. Students from non-dominant cultural backgrounds perceive that their traditions, language and life experiences are frequently excluded from school.

### **b) Teachers participation**

Exclusion also affects the teachers. The limited role that teachers play in the life of the school is another structural problem and is connected with the idea about teachers as technicians. What do we mean? We mean teachers are thinkers, and intellectuals, who must reflect seriously on their work, that they are concerned firstly with their own individual achievement and perhaps secondly with advancing students along career ladders.

Teachers in an intercultural school should show curiosity and interest in very different ways. The role of teachers is not limited to individual commitments, but to social engagements. We should be ready and able to work with others (colleagues, parents, students, experts, administration officers, volunteers). We should be ready to take the risk of changing our own and personal vision about students and school structure.

The role assigned to teachers is made explicit in the administrative norms which are used to evaluate and promote teachers. For instance, to obtain the Award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS, England, 2003) the Standards applied include the following professional values and practice:

1. High expectations of all pupils; respect their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds; and are committed to raising their educational achievement.
2. Treat pupils consistently, with respect and consideration, and are concerned for their development as learners.
3. Demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and behaviour that they expect from their pupils.
4. Communicate sensitively and effectively with parents and carers, recognising their roles in pupils' learning.
5. Can contribute to, and share responsibly in, the corporate life of schools.

#### **Which practices do you consider adequate to exemplify these statements?**

We think that teacher disempowerment correlates highly with disparaging attitudes toward students; that is, the more powerless teachers feel, the more negative they feel toward their students as well. In contrast, teachers who feel that they have autonomy in their classrooms and with their curriculum generally also have high expectations of their students. The undesirable effect we should avoid is to make teaching an isolated activity. This must be possible and interaction common among teachers, even sharing a group of students or observing each other, analysing their teaching strategies and communication skills.

### **c) Parents participation**

In schools with a strong component of parental involvement, students are consistently better achievers than in otherwise identical schools with less parental involvement. Why? What are the reasons that justify this effect?

What is meant by parental involvement is not always clear. It includes meetings, participation in parent-teacher association, conferences, collaboration in administration or teaching activities. In general, parents' involvement in school activities is very scarce, and links with the students' communities are rarely established. This is not strange considering that their contributions to the education of their children are seldom valued. Furthermore, not all parents perceive schools as welcoming environments, due to language differences or socio-cultural customs which make schools alienating and intimidating, among other reasons.

More explicit recommendations have been included in Module 6 that specifically deal with the analysis of the relationships between school, family and community.



## activities and suggestions

### Activity 1

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Analyse the weekly timetable of a class in a primary and a secondary school. If possible, present it in a graphic way. Consider critically this time distribution taking into account: the relevance attributed to specific contents and activities; flexibility or rigidity to adapt to individual needs and interests; human resources and collaboration among teachers and community, etc.

### Activity 2

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The physical structure of schools has been criticized for not being an appropriate environment for learning. Design a school for either the primary or secondary level that might meet this requirement. State the primary objectives you would have for this school (consider the objectives proposed in module 1).

### Activity 3

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Compare the following standard document regulating the behaviour, rules and relations among students, teachers, families and community. The documents do not contain the whole code. Selected items have been chosen in order to exemplify them.

**a) Primary School Resslova in Prague 2003/2004****CODE OF CONDUCT****1.- School attendance**

- It is the basic responsibility of every student to attend the school regularly and on time according to the set timetable and to participate in all compulsory and voluntary subjects he/she has chosen.
- If a student cannot attend classes because of prior known reasons, parents or guardians must seek the pupil's teacher for permission for the student to be excused
- Absences during lessons must be explained by the student's parents or guardians according to the school regulations
- Regulations concerning excusable absences and releasing students from lessons:
- If a student misses one lesson and he/she is released by a teacher, who is leading the lesson the student's absence is recorded in the class register

**2.- Student's rights**

- A student has the right to be educated and to participate in lessons according to the set timetable
- A student has the right to relax and have free time during breaks and the midday break
- A student has the right to have access to information, especially that which encourages his/her spiritual and social development.
- S/He has the right to be protected from information that could prevent his/her positive development and inappropriately affect his/her ethics

**3. Student's duties**

- A student has to comply with the social regulations concerning appropriate behaviour (for example, stand up when a teacher enters or leaves the class and acknowledge all adult persons in the school building)
- A student has to arrive at school early enough in order to be at the classroom/workroom/gym before the lesson starts and to be prepared for the lesson (tools, text books, exercise books, sports suit, etc...); late arrivals are recorded by the teacher in the class book
- Student has to change his/her shoes and his/her clothing in order to comply with the hygienic and security regulations

- A student has to behave in a considerate way towards other students at all times in the school in order to protect their safekeeping and to avoid any material damage
- A student has to comply with the school regulations in classes where lessons might require higher security measures

#### 4. Rules for classification

- The performance of a student in individual subjects, his/her behaviour and overall achievements are classified according to common grades set by the regulations proposed by the MŠMT (The Department of Education, Youth and Physical training) for primary schools
- The basic data and records for classifying and assessing student's achievements are obtained according to the student's results received on the basis of different examination methods, written exams, and observing the student's overall performance during lessons
- When assessing the behaviour of a student a teacher acts autonomously and assesses the overall performance of the student
- In the case of recurring small misdemeanours (such as late arrivals or not changing shoes) or in case of serious contravention of the school code of conduct, a student is assessed by a reduced grade in terms of behaviour. The reduced grade does not have to be preceded by an educational measure

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#### b) Furuset School (Norway), 2003/2004

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##### FURUSET SCHOOL (NORWAY)

We have a common responsibility for creating an environment for learning and well-being.

Therefore: Behave towards others the way you want others to behave towards you.

Respect and consideration

Therefore we expect you to follow certain golden rules:

- Show consideration and respect for others,
- Do not use utterances or behave in a way that others may consider as racism,
- Do not bully others, but help to make Furuset school a place free from harassment,

- Do not tease others because of religion or view of life different from yours,
- Talk in a pleasant way to others, do not swear or use offensive or pestering remarks,
- Do not exclude fellow pupils from play and common activities, indoors or outdoors,
- Do not trip anybody up, fight or disturb others when they are playing.

#### Co-operation and co-responsibility

We have a common responsibility for the entire school day (the substance of the classes)

Therefore:

- You do your homework on time,
  - You attend on time for classes and appointments,
  - You bring what you need at any time,
  - You play ball on the fields as agreed upon,
  - You may leave the school area only by special agreements,
  - You take good care of your personal belongings. Avoid bringing personal valuables to school. The school will not refund such valuables.
  - You are positive and attentive. You do your best in class work and show respect for the teaching and the need of your peers to work in peace.
  - You do not use your mobile phone (cell phone) in the area of the school (that also includes excursions organised by the school),
  - You take good care of your study books,
  - You take good care of everything that belongs to the school, indoors and outdoors.
  - You keep your things tidy.
  - You use the school yard entrances.
  - You stick the school's Internet arrangements.
  - We expect you to take responsibility for your person.
-

**c) Primary Spanish School, 2003/2004**

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**REGLAMENTO DE RÉGIMEN INTERNO**

**(Internal norms regulations)**

**The students should (to themselves) :**

- Be punctual, it is not permitted to enter the centre ten minutes after the start time.
- Keep their belongings in order.
- Be responsible in class and when making activities.
- Bring the required materials.

**The students should (in relation to their fellow pupils):**

- Respect others belongings.
- Not humiliate, fight, bully or call names.
- Respect their work.

**The students should (in relation to their teachers):**

- Be honest with them
  - Converse in order to solve any problems or difficulties
  - Respect and obey them
- 

**Activity 4**

---

Read the different scenarios described at the first section. They show diverse kind of school models. Consider and answer the following questions:

- **What are the implications of each of them in order to achieve the intercultural objectives in education?**
  - **What are the implications of each scenario concerning participation, people roles, space and time organisation?**
-



## proposals for collaboration

### PROPOSAL 1

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Here is an activity to undertake in order to explore the mental image we have about our school as an institution. The activity consists of 5 steps:

1. To canvass a group of students, ask them a question and to discuss it: What is your school about? Describe it,...spaces, timetable, common activities, participation... What kind of changes would you introduce to improve it?
2. Meet with a group of parents. Ask them the same questions about school.
3. Now reveal the student opinions to parents. It will show their different images and expectations.
4. Show the answer given by directors, teachers, or yourself about the questions proposed.
5. Finally, we should make connections and suggest proposals for change and improvement.

### PROPOSAL 2

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Select one of the recommended pictures or books included in the resources section. Read or observe it (partially or completely, according to the time available) and discuss the school structure and organisation shown on it.

### PROPOSAL 3

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The limited roles of both students and teachers have been cited as a fundamental problem of schools. Specifically, the criticism has been that because schools do not provide opportunities for either teachers or students to exercise critical thinking or leadership, they subvert the very purpose of education as preparation for democratic participation. Discuss with your colleagues how schools might provide more opportunities for both teachers and students to be more fully engaged.





## planning and adapting curriculum

1. Visit a school and select three different locations to observe. For example, the teachers room, a classroom, the entrance to the director office. Stay there to observe for at least 20 minutes. Write down about the people passing, the activities or tasks they are doing, the kind of interactions they establish.

Reflect about the observation and how the space organisation and architectural conditions influence the relations and activities at school.

What changes would you introduce at the school concerning the information you have gathered?

2. Look at the pictures , they correspond to different schools. What can you say about space organization? Which could correspond to the one (#1) described in the critical incident section?





3. The following items refer to some specific practices that describe an intercultural school climate. Consider them and write examples of “good practices” for each of them. Write an example appropriate to a primary school (6-12 years old) and another to a secondary school (13-16 years old):

- Respect and attention to cultural pluralism present in the centre affects the school environment in its entirety and are addressed in all educational decisions, not in a sporadic or isolated way
- Opportunities are provided to develop a positive self-concept and self-esteem in the students
- Opportunities are provided to develop a positive self-concept and self-esteem in the students
- All those involved (teachers, parents, students, other) are helped in order to understand the personal and academic experiences of the diverse cultural groups
- Cultural options present in society are analysed and explored (diverse lifestyles, values, beliefs, etc.)
- A comparative approach is adopted in the study of different cultural groups in order to avoid exposing any of them as a reference model
- The events, situations and conflicts are interpreted from the different perspectives and interests of the implied groups

4. Connect to <http://www.unesco.cl/pdf/actyeven/ppe/boletin/artesp/33-10.pdf>

Read the explanation about teaching in flexible groups. Discuss with your colleagues (personally or in a virtual conference) about its possibilities and the best way to use it in a primary school.

5. Watch the INTER video and analyse the diverse scenarios exposed on it. Focus your attention on the main dimensions considered in this module.

6. Read the following story. Does it have anything to do with the curriculum and the school you know?

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Over the past 20 years, JANE ELLIOTT, a former teacher in the mid west USA, has committed herself to leading a fight against prejudice, ignorance and racism in society. She continues to practise the same philosophy which she began with her school class after Martin Luther King jun.'s death in 1968. Today her audience is much broader including teachers, students, firemen, prison officers, and even the complete staff of a Bank. In her workshops she divides people on the basis of two arbitrary physical properties - BLUE or BROWN EYES. She declares the latter to be better and more intelligent and grants them privileges, privileges she denies to the blue eyed, deemed to be worse, less intelligent and lower qualified.

For the first time, many white people become acquainted with the feeling of belonging to a condemned group which can never win. They experience the feeling of being discriminated against, in the same way that society today discriminates against women, people with a different skin colour or the disabled. In only 15 minutes, Jane Elliott manages to build up a realistic microcosmos of society today with all its phenomena and feelings. As already known from the ill reputed Milgram experiment, even participants who knew the "rules" are unable to remain uninvolved. What starts as a game turns into cruel reality which causes some participants' emotions to erupt with unforeseen intensity.

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7. You have been selected to organize a new primary school. There are 6 groups, one for each level (from first to sixth). You should make decisions about every structural dimensions we have developed in the information section. Please, describe what the school would be like. Discuss your suggestions with other colleagues. Write down the final description.



## specific resources and additional links

### Books

**Nieto, Sonia** (1992). *Affirming diversity. The socio-political context of multicultural education*. New York: Longman. The book explores the meaning, necessity and benefits of multicultural education for students from all backgrounds. The author shows the impact on learning of racism, discrimination, teacher expectations, language, social class, and school policies and practices. Every chapter includes a case study, a personal story about the main questions she proposes to discuss.

**Senge, Peter** (2000). *Schools that learn*. Doubleday, Toronto. The main objective of the author is to improve schools as organizations. School should be a democratic, complex and inclusive system. Usually, teachers are taught to work as individuals, so staff development has to help them learn to work together. This is an ongoing process, with enough time to learn new ways of teaching in order to build a school perceived as a living organism, with a brain and promoting transformation.

**Oury, Fernand and Pain, Jacques** (1972). *Cronique de l'école caserne*. Paris: François Maspero. The military headquarters school exists. It is a school where teachers, students, parents, supervisors, are prisoners of bureaucratic structures. It is a school where the major concern is controlling everything: student behaviour, the official curriculum, the schedule and spaces. It is a school with huge buildings, locked, isolated, with long lines of pupils, and special classes, special times and special teachers for special (handicapped, retarded, diverse) students.

**Caldwell, J. & Ford, M.P.** "Where have all the bluebirds gone! How to soar with flexible grouping". (Heinemann, 2002). It is an interesting book about practical cases describing how to establish flexible groups at primary and secondary schools.

*Observation scale*. Needs Assessment Report INTER Project (2003). It is a document developed to analyse the intercultural climate at school. It contains a guideline for observation, a description of practices adjusted to the intercultural school requirements. It has been included as an annex of the Needs Assessment Report (Inter Project, 2003). <http://www.uned.es/interproject>

### Websites

<http://www.proyecto-atlantida.org> It is the web site of a group of education professionals of diverse areas and levels who trying to reflect together about public school in the Spanish

context. They propose resources and practices to improve educational quality. The main objective is to build a democratic school for all the pupils. At the web site there are documents, resources, experiences on concrete schools and a useful network to keep in contact can be found.

## Movies

**"The Wave"**, a movie based on a true incident that occurred in a high school history class in Palo Alto, California, in 1969. The powerful forces of group pressure that pervaded many historic movements such as Nazism are recreated in the classroom when history teacher Burt Ross introduces a "new" system to his students. And before long "The Wave," with its rules of "strength through discipline, community, and action," sweeps from the classroom through the entire school. And as most of the students join the movement, Laurie Saunders and David Collins recognize the frightening momentum of "The Wave" and realize they must stop it before it's too late."

**"Today starts everything"**. It is a French movie about a primary school at a "banlieu". It describes the school and the students live in a low income and middle class environment. It is excellent in describing the small incidents and events of the school and the milieu.



## reflective questions and evaluation

Which is the mental image that describes the school we know, as teachers or students? Let us think about this and become aware of our own mental image or metaphor about school as an organization. Let's consider its characteristics concerning:

- grouping students: tracking and testing
- space and time organization
- disciplinary policies
- participation and roles of student, teachers and parents.

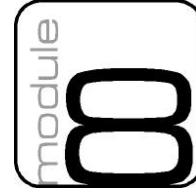
When we think of an intercultural school, which is the mental model, the metaphor we are thinking about?

To us, the intercultural school is a living organism functioning as a system, as a complex system, led by a brain and characterized by the flux and transformation of the processes involved in its growth. What does this mean? This means that the school is a complex system where different organs interact to make a function (to teach, to learn) , to keep

alive the school. The school is a brain, it thinks, and learns, that analyses and makes decisions. The school is flux and transformation, it is not static, it is oriented toward change and learning.

What are the changes we have to make in our school image in order to fit the intercultural school metaphor?

To answer this questions we can use the information presented in the module as well as the reflection accumulated by preparing the activities and consulting the directory of resources.



## teaching and learning strategies

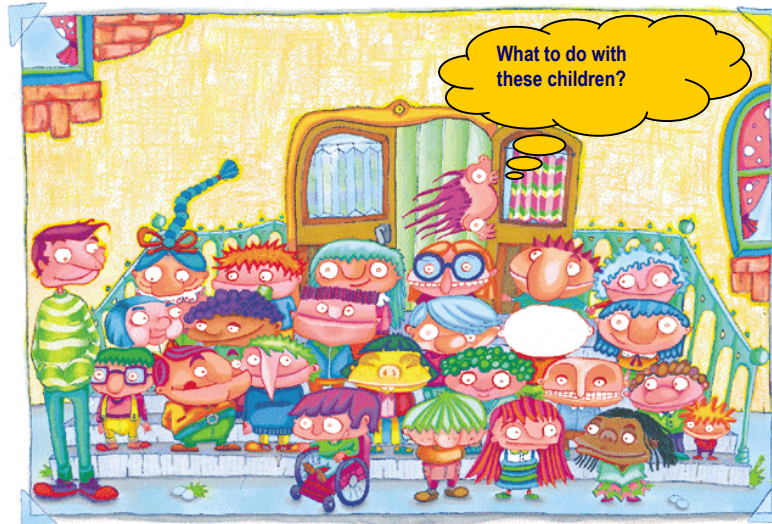
“Two teachers with the same training, working within the same context, just twenty centimetres away from each other (distance between their classrooms), under comparable conditions, with similar students, perform in a completely opposite way: one tries to uncover in collaboration with the rest the nature of that magic process of learning; the other one, regurgitates the lesson assuming there are causal links between teaching and learning. When this latter does not occur (unmistakably demonstrated by objective and reliable tests), the responsibility is placed upon the student’s lack of self-commitment and hard work, short intelligence or scarce knowledge-base with which the student comes from previous levels”.

**(Santos Guerra, 1993)**

Our intention is for us to reflect about our own teaching practice and the reasons why we act and maintain certain rigid patterns in the practice of teaching. We suggest you identify which are the barriers to improving practice in a more flexible and intercultural way. This module puts into debate our implicit theories about teaching and learning. Finally it focuses on exemplifying different strategies, resources and techniques to adapt our teaching to the different learning needs of the students.



to start thinking



Juan is a Primary teacher with few years of experience. He has got a vacancy in the Public School “Mad Bird”.

The population of this centre is very diverse. This school enrolls pupils from different nationalities: Moroccan, Romanian, Slovenian,...

Juan is desperate, although happy and proud of his job. He is involved in a new situation which requires new strategies and answers and he has no knowledge or experience about them. The School environment is completely different (pupils relations, culture meaning, language,...).

Other problems are:

- the non-existence of an integral approach for delivering cross-cultural diversity
- the chaotic organization of the school
- the inappropriate distribution of responsibilities
- his own appraisal (which is clearly lacking)
- he does not know how to teach in this area



- what kind of activities to select
- how to assess the pupils
- how to treat his pupils
- what resources are available which he could use
- how enhance and care for his pupils

To sum up, he is suffering serious difficulties to progress his teaching and delivery appropriately, but he does know that he **needs**:

- more information about similar experiences
- didactic resources
- curricular adaptations
- connections with others institutions involved in this field of education

So he wonders what *he should do with these children!*



## information

Nowadays our schools and classes have changed. Society is progressing and diversifying, new technologies have appeared, we can exchange information in a few seconds,... Consequently, teachers have to improve their professional practice and embrace this new scholarly situation. In general, pupils need specific help during their academic life, and this reality is no different for pupils from different nationalities. In this sense, when we talk about the improvement of schools, we have to reflect on our own practice first, and think of human or material resources and not to solve deficits or handicaps, but to meet all our students' needs. Additionally, their use is established by a curricular solution within a concrete context. If we want to redesign the curricular program, we should think about the specific conditions of our practice and the principles we assume about teaching and learning.

We recommend you to do it in two steps:

1. **Self assessment**
2. **Teaching/learning strategies and resources selection.**

We place special attention on communication strategies and language teaching at school.

### 1. Self assessment

When one of our goals is to deal successfully with diversity in the classroom, we may ask ourselves about many different aspects of the teaching-learning process. The way of approaching our problems is different each time. Sometimes we blame the students we have in class, sometimes we blame the shortage of resources, and sometimes we think about the way we carry out our work and become aware we need additional and better training. Thus, we usually enrol on courses which frequently fail to meet our needs and expectations.

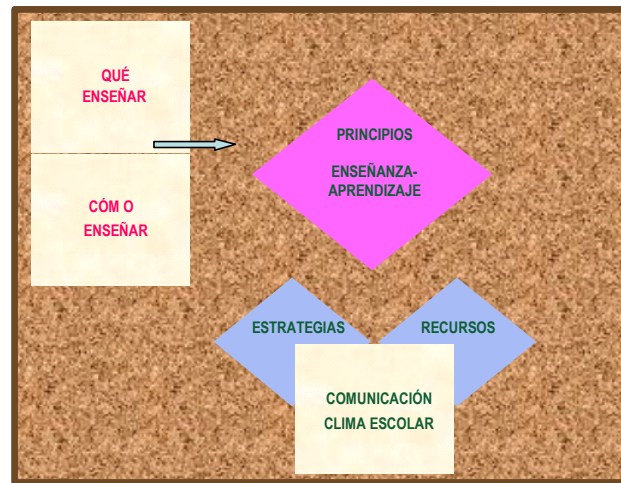
From our point of view, the correct thing to do is to think about the real conditions of our situation by asking ourselves about:

SELF ASSESSMENT	
<p>1. <i>What is my class like?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- students</li> <li>- their origins</li> <li>- expectations</li> <li>- interests, concerns</li> </ul>	
<p>2. Evidence regarding diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language</li> <li>- former school experience</li> <li>- family context</li> <li>- community context</li> </ul> <p>3. What am I like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I think teaching means...</li> <li>- I think learning means...</li> <li>- My ideal teacher is one...</li> <li>- My ideal student is one...</li> <li>- I must make my students to be able to...</li> </ul>	
<p>4. Look for a methodological response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- materials</li> <li>- activities</li> <li>- use of space</li> <li>- temporal distribution (timing)</li> <li>- grouping</li> <li>- starting point</li> <li>- evaluation procedures</li> <li>- participation</li> </ul>	
<p>5. What are the available resources?</p>	
<p>6. What are the short comings in our training</p>	

The question we have to answer is:

**How do we teach in order to meet the learning needs of these diverse students?**

**We have to select, plan and implement specific strategies – which ones are the most appropriate?**



## 2. Teaching and learning strategies

It is easy to find out and collect many different teaching strategies. The key question is not to know about them but to know why we are going to use one or another. The criteria to select an appropriate strategy is to take into account:

- What are the objectives of our educational practice?
- What are our assumptions about teaching and learning
- What are the real needs of our students in a specific school setting?

We have reflected about the objective of education when we revealed the compulsory education principles (module 1). There were two main underlying objectives:

- to meet the right of every student to become a full member of the society.
- to recognise and value the different capabilities, rules, knowledge and interests of the students.

The objectives are nothing to do with indoctrination or custodial care or selection based on standard criteria. Compulsory education objectives are:

- to develop competencies more than to fill our minds with information.

- to consider feelings and beliefs as well as cognitive or intellectual development.
- to guarantee access to further educational resources.

### 2.1. Assumptions about teaching and learning.

Module 4 reflects about this question. Please, review some of the ideas we have discussed at this point. Here, we have to keep in mind that to teach is not to transfer knowledge, but to create the possibility for the production or construction of knowledge (Freire, 1964). We assume two main principles of learning namely, experience and interaction. These two main principles suggest the creation of possible spaces, activities and situations where teachers and students cooperate and share experiences.

#### a) Experiential learning

"My son's best experience at learning (the one I thought it was most valuable for him and also the one he actually picked up when I asked) was a summer camp in Black creek (Toronto, Canada) when he was ten years old. Black Creel is an alive pioneer museum where visitors can actually see and experience how pioneer live in the 18th Century. The take children during summers for them to experience that kind of life first hand. There they were supposed to attend school (all children in the same room) and to engage as apprentices with different craftsmen: the tinsmith, the blacksmith (which was my son's favourite), the shoemaker, the carpenter, and so on. As my son puts it: "it was a great experience for me because I felt like living inside a bubble, where I learned to experience a world different from the one I was living in, and really learned to appreciate very different points of view. It was as if I were one of them, thinking their thoughts, living that kind of live and actually thinking as if a were really living that kind of life"

"In a third-grade classroom they are going to start studying measures of volume. The first thing the teacher does is to ask the children: How much (amount of) milk do you drink daily at breakfast? The children respond what they think they really intake:

'I drink a saucer, which equals to half a litre'.

I drink a glass, which is a litre and a half'...

All answers are equally admitted.

Now comes the time for experimenting. We go out to the garden taking with us pails, buckets, plastic bowls, glasses, saucers, tetra-brick recipients, small containers. We fill the pails with water, and from there we have to discover the amount that corresponds to a litre. In groups of four, the transfer of water begins:

- This recipient is a litre!, It says so here!...

- If I fill four glasses up to the brim I get a litre, then the glass is one fourth of a litre...

- If I fill two one-and-a-half-litre bottles from the pail, and three fourth-litre glasses...I get.. four litres?, no wait, that makes three litres and three fourths!

Finally, we mix a little mud, and make chocolate...

... I think the saucer at home is about one fourth to half litre".

(from parents interviews made by INTER team)

### **b) Cooperative learning**

When we think on what or how we have learnt, an image comes to mind: we used to see ourselves alone, in front of the textbook or the class notes; as well as being quiet and concentrating on our work under the gaze of our teacher. Attention, silence, individuality are partly inherent of the teaching practices we have experienced as students. According to the intercultural approach, defined in terms of experience and cooperation in teaching and learning, we should be able to identify, select and apply diverse strategies, but which ones? The ones that meet our students needs? The ones that respond to the compulsory education objectives? The ones based on experience and cooperation among teachers and students.

### **2.2. Specific strategies.**

Let us consider some of the strategies we may use in our classroom. It is important to assume that sometimes we are already using some of them, but the question is whether we are using them in the right way and to what extent we fit the implicit objectives of the intercultural approach.

#### **a) Flexible grouping**

Flexible grouping can be arranged in different ways - as a school strategy or as a classroom device. As a school strategy we can choose a graded *schooling* (i.e. a traditional structure of homogeneous groups of students that were born in a specific chronological period), or a semi-graded schooling (that is, heterogeneous and flexible groups of students at the same stage but in different age-brackets); or a non-graded schooling (heterogeneous and flexible groups of students chosen according to their interests, and levels of knowledge in the different areas. In this connection, classes stop being an autonomous unit of work and consequently teachers must manage specific didactic strategies, they must have enough resources and timetables and timing must be flexible).

#### **b) Learning communities**

We think that only on the communicative interaction, the families, the teachers, the community and the society would be able to build an useful educational project.

[www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net](http://www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net)



The educational project of the learning communities implies an opportunity for social and cultural change for the school and the community it serves. It guarantees the active participation of all the members.

Learning communities are an answer to the school failure, discrimination and exclusion by prioritising the following objectives:

- educational equity
- quality and excellence
- dialogue and critical thinking



Teachers, students, families and community work together in a common project, sharing expectations and objectives.

**(See further information in module 3)**

[www.berrikuntza.net/edukia/aniztasuna/ikaskomunitateak/cmndds\\_prdji.es.html?etapa\\_id=3](http://www.berrikuntza.net/edukia/aniztasuna/ikaskomunitateak/cmndds_prdji.es.html?etapa_id=3)  
[www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net](http://www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net)

### c) Projects

Students are put into groups according to different projects which entail different fields of knowledge. These projects foster collaborative work.

“When we were in the 4th grade, the teacher proposed us to participate in a Project on Greece. We formed different groups, each one working on a specific aspect related to classical Greece: its history, mythology, daily life and art. Each member of the group researched on the subject they were going to work on. We looked up books in the library, educational CD's, and specific resources on the Internet. Then we had to work on these contents as a group, in order to present it later onto the big group. We chose what type of presentation we would make, and how we would tell our part to our classmates. The historians decided on a comic; the group of mythologists elaborated some theatre scripts which they performed afterwards; those in charge of city daily life turned the school hall into a real polis, with its agora, the marketplace, the odeon, the theatre...; the art experts organised an exhibition on architecture, sculpture, pottery,...

The teacher assisted us throughout the whole process; he looked up materials or resources, giving his opinion on the scripts or how they could be improved, helping us see if something was not correct. If discrepancies arose among the members of the group regarding work methodology, he made us think on the pros and contras of each suggestion until we all agreed upon one, or several possible alternatives.

The day we put everything “on stage” was a success. We invited the whole school to see our project, we were real Greeks.

Later on, the teacher took us to the Prado Museum. He had prepared a ginkana (contest) whereby we had to find different objects and people related to the classical Greek culture in a series of paintings he had selected. I don’t recall whether we won or not, but I do remember all the things we learned with the project”.

**(from students interviews made by INTER team)**

#### **d) Workshops**

Set of activities designed for groups of students with common interests but at different school levels. Workshops are carried out to develop or widen specific and motivating aspects of curriculum. Other advantages of workshops are: the size of groups which are smaller, the possibility to work collaboratively with families.

“Like every year, the school organised different workshops according to the proposals we made at the beginning of the school year. I took part in a radio workshop and in the computer one. There were boys and girls from different classrooms, and there were also adults: parents and other people from the community who knew the school. We rotated every once in a while, if we wished to do so. I was in the radio workshop at first. There we put together programmes for the school’s radio station, with interviews, songs, readings. We had to reach a consensus on the contents that we would present and then prepare the program which came on live.

**(from students interviews made by INTER team)**

Later on I participated in the computer workshop. There we learned to do inter-active activities; we first decided which type of activity we wanted: games, stories, presentations,... The teacher would guide us regarding the programs we could use. Since two of us played in the band, they suggested we make a web called “My town’s band”. We recorded the sound of different instruments, took pictures, interviewed the musicians, we explained what a band was, we assembled the performance programme, and we also talked about the local fairs...”

**(from students interviews made by INTER team)**

#### **e) Seminars**

Seminars are aligned to research or study about a subject on periodic sessions according to a carefully constructed timetable. The participants do not receive previously pro-



duced information, they must look for it by using their own capabilities in a cooperative climate.

“Thinking about learning experiences, one of the most richest for me has been Salzburg Seminar session 372 “Race and Ethnicity” in which I took part as a fellow. We were less than half a hundred people from all over the world (35 different countries) living together in a marvellous castle which seem to be outside the real world. There we attended lectures in the mornings, had breakfast, coffee breaks, lunch and dinner together, worked in tiny groups in the afternoons, and talked, danced, listened to music or played table tennis (till 1 or 2 am) for a whole week, sharing our experiences (personal and academic) about racism and ethnicity. I felt my mind and my feelings deeply challenged and placed in a position from where I consciously learned how to build “ties that bind” (which became the motto of our session) across categories, labels, situations, or geographical distances”.

(a member of the INTER team)

#### f) Corners

They offer the possibility to use time and space within the classroom in new and different ways. Small groups of work are arranged in specific places in order to develop certain abilities. Places are specially designed to meet the students’ interests and needs. Students can work either individually, with a partner or in small groups. Every student has to occupy a different corner in the different moments of his/her learning- teaching process so that at the end of the process each student has occupied all the different corners.



“When I was with the small children (infant school), I organised the class by corners. This meant that along with shared spaces in which the whole class was involved in common activities, there were other spaces in which activities carried out were aimed at developing specific skills (symbolisation, conversation, discovery...). The class was thus organised by corners: that of the symbolic games, the reading corner, the experiential corner, the computer corner, the small plastic mattresses, etc. The children went from corner to corner; they decided on their own which corner they wanted to visit, and when to do it. I did limit the number of children per corner: each child had an index card with their name, picture, and personal symbol on it. The children placed their cards in a box by each corner, and when there were already six cards in one of them, they knew it was fully occupied and they had to choose another one. During all this process I observed them, although what enabled me to know them better was the final stage, when we all gathered together on the mattresses and each would tell where they had been, what they had done, how, with whom... and little by little I discovered their preferences, their capacity or difficulties in establishing relationships with others, their influences, their initiative, their own way of organising time,...



In a way, I was aware that they would encounter something similar in their daily life: different options to choose from, to participate in, change, discuss... I was especially interested in school not being different from the world they live in, as I always considered that education only made sense in this way.

I cannot understand why, as students advanced to the upper grades in Primary Education, teachers forgot all about corners, and started the lessons by asking the children: Where did we stop yesterday?"

(from teachers interviews made by INTER team)



### g) Modules

They offer the possibility of introducing and organizing contents and activities meeting the needs of students in heterogeneous groups. It makes it possible to adopt a global approach. The information and activities are oriented to a common subject that is studied from different disciplines.

### h) Peer tutoring

Peer tutoring is based on two usual circumstances in the classroom: intellectual level differences among learners and their capacity for collaboration. Teachers group a pair of students and establish an asymmetric relation between both of them (the tutor and the tutored) and an academic common objective that is recognized and accepted by both of them.

"When I changed from the North-American school to the Spanish one, I felt very lost, disoriented in class. I did not understand the teacher when she started explaining the divisions on the board, and she placed the numbers and division lines in a way unknown to me, in a completely opposite way to the way I had previously learned to operate divisions. I was used to a different method, but neither she nor I could clearly say what was different. It was only when a classmate told me how he performed the division when I finally understood and could continue learning without any problems from then on"

(from students interviews made by INTER team)

### i) Role play

Role play is a natural human activity. Students assume a variety of roles during a normal day. Younger children, in particular, take on a host of imaginary, and often adult, roles during normal play, creating complex characters and scenarios which are acted out with sincerity and commitment. In artificially constructed role play, however, students are asked to take on roles with which they may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable, or to act out for a particular purpose. Students will vary as to the ease with which they can assume different roles, so warm-up period is useful, however, for all students to facilitate the transfer from the role they are in (a student) to that which they are being asked to take on and to practise the skills required for effective role play. Here are some examples of warm-up exercises:

### Traders

Students work in pairs. Each is a trader with some personal qualities or attributes which she wants to exchange, for example, a sense of humour, wisdom, good looks, gentleness, musical ability. The two traders haggle and barter over the relative values of these items, each trying to strike a good deal.

This is a useful exercise for personal clarification of values and attitudes as well as for practising role play and communication skills.

### Quick decision-making

Students working in pairs or small groups are given roles or an outline of a situation. In role, they are then given a problem or conflict to solve and a short period of time (perhaps one or two minutes) in which to come up with a solution. At the end of the allotted time, solutions are announced to the whole group; discussion follows on the processes employed to reach a decision and how participants felt under the pressure of time.

**(Pike, G. And Selby, D. (1992): Global teacher, global learner. London: Hodder and Stoughton, pp.197-199)**

### j) Webquests

A Webquests is an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet. A Webquests includes the following elements:

- Introduction or subject presentation
- Task: what we have to do? There are different types of tasks avoiding merely collecting information. For instance, to solve a problem, to analyse some information, to ask a set of questions, to judge a behaviour or situation, and the different strategies we have presented in this module.
- Process: suggestions in order to accomplish the task in an appropriate way. An important element is to train in group management.
- Resources: sources of information, in internet and others.
- Evaluation. The evaluation criteria and proceeding are explicit.

Conclusion. It is important to summarize the process and results, deriving suggestions for former activities.

A webquest is "an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet" (**B. Dodge**). Maybe you're convinced the Internet and the World Wide Web are terrific resources for learning. Maybe you're blown away by the possibilities? Maybe you still need a little convincing? The following links and activities were organized and created to provide a clear vision and process for intelligently integrating the embarrassment of riches that is the Internet, a richness that is worthless without the clever guidance of an educator.

To design a engaging activity is easy for a experienced teacher. It is something they can do even sleeping and it is the basic dimension of a successful webquest. The key idea is to find a task that provokes thinking about the content. Otherwise, it is only a web page. It is useful to provide teachers with training on cooperative teaching. A condition for an

excellent webquest is to promote cooperation among learners, to provoke interdependence among them.

<http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/webquest/webquest.html>

"While some argue that technology has replaced critical thinking, students in Connie Martin's eighth-grade English class combine both of them with aplomb. Divided into groups for a 'Webquest,' students use laptop computers to research the ethics of animal research in preparation for assuming the roles of research scientist, animal rights activist and medical doctor. Along with a written report, they will deliver oral reports in front of the class, which will be recorded by fellow students. Sitting around a table, the students condense their information to fit on index cards and practice their verbal presentations.

([www.webquest.com](http://www.webquest.com))

Some webquest examples may be found at:

Iber Safari: [www.educa.aragob.es/cpmauteb/webquest/iberfauna/index.htm](http://www.educa.aragob.es/cpmauteb/webquest/iberfauna/index.htm)

[www.edugaliza.org/prestige/webquest/index\\_espanhol.html](http://www.edugaliza.org/prestige/webquest/index_espanhol.html)

Radio Days: A Webquest [www.thematzats.com/radio/](http://www.thematzats.com/radio/)

When choosing activities, we should try to take into consideration the opinion of the students, so that the activities become a motivating resource. Personally, we think that corners are a very positive way of working in Primary Education, though it involves a lot of previous work for the teacher including aspects such as graded and introductory activities...

Dealing with Secondary Education, projects and modules seem to work quite well when tackling diversity. Evaluation systems can vary in any case: control lists, students' notebooks, direct observation... work for corners, whereas discussions, expositions, posters... work for Secondary Education...

### 3.- Communication strategies

A common element in all the repertoire of activities we have proposed in the former point is to promote communication among all the persons involved in the teaching/learning process. We consider communication as the exchange of meanings between individuals through a common system of symbols. Education is always communication. From an intercultural approach, educational activities imply the exchange of meanings as well as creating new meanings derived from our common experiences.

The children are seated at two benches of eight, each bench shares two cans containing paint and pencils. They are colouring a drawing and Sarah, one of the students, asks for grey paint, which she does not have in her can, from a classmate on the other table, who refuses to give it to her. Sarah starts to protest and the teacher approaches and asks her to explain what is going on. The teacher asks the boy why he will not give her the paint. He answers that Anna Delia, another classmate on Sarah's bench, didn't return some paint that he had given her the other day. The teacher asks Sarah to reply and she says

that she is not Anna Delia and intends to return the paint. The teacher then encourages the boy to talk about the questions with Anna Delia. Finally she gives back the paint of the day before and the boy gives the grey paint to Sarah.

(Observation made in an English class of second grade primary.  
INTER Needs Assessment Report)

The school climate influences the decisions that the teachers make in the classroom.

Teachers and students use the familiar form of address and call each other by their first names. In the classroom one finds a “controlled disorder”. A large amount of teamwork is undertaken and there is a high level of participation. We noticed that in between classes the teachers knock on the door before entering the classroom. They will not reprimand a student in public but will take him/her to one side. On various occasions a pupil that was disrupting the lesson was ordered to leave the classroom; the argument used has always been something like “you are getting excited, go into the corridor and calm down, when you think that you can continue with the class come back in”.

(Observation made in a primary school. INTER Needs Assessment Report).

There are some recommendations to guide our actions in order to create a communicative climate in the classroom:

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Teacher behaviour promoting a healthy climate in the classroom (**Nieda**, 1993)

- To value whatever achievement of the students, no matter how small it is.
  - Don't reject a project or work at a whole.
  - Once you have pointed out a fail, to give suggestions to improve it.
  - To point out the flexible and open minded behaviour.
  - To appreciate the actions oriented to solve problems.
  - To value the efforts oriented to achieve the task to do.
  - To appreciate the independent opinions and consequent actions.
  - To organize the classroom according to a series of norms previously established.
  - When a norm has been negotiated, it must be respected.
  - When a conflict appears, to ask for a commission of students to discuss and propose solutions.
  - To be able to solve the mistakes and ask for excuses.
  - When a task has been done or a period of work is over, to provoke reflection about the activity, the process and results. To analyse the positive and negative points. To write down suggestions to improve the next task or activity.
-

- To invite parents and other professionals and volunteers to share their experiences with the students.
- To dedicate special days to reflect about groups and people whose activity has contributed to the humanity development and welfare.
- To organize scientific exhibitions, book fairs, projects performance, oriented the students to get ready for the active life.
- To facilitate a research methodology oriented to improve self-esteem, reasoning and mind independence in the students.

Here are some recommendations to improve advocacy and inquiry in the educational process. Let us take into account these considerations in our quotidian activity at school.

<b>Protocols for improved advocacy</b>	
<i>What to do</i>	<i>What to say</i>
State your assumptions, and describe the data that led to them	This is what I think, and this is how I got there
As you speak, try to picture the other people's perspectives on what you are saying	
Make your reasoning explicit	I came to this conclusion because...
Encourage others to explore your model, your assumptions, and your data	What do you think about what I just said?
<b>Protocols for improved inquiry</b>	
<i>What to do</i>	<i>What to say</i>
Explain your reasons for inquiring, and how your inquiry relates to your own concerns, hopes, and needs.	I am asking you about your assumptions here because...
Use non-aggressive language, particularly attending cultural differences	Can you help me understand your thinking?
Look for information that will help people move forward	What do we agree on, and what do we disagree on?
Ask for the groups help in redesigning the situation	It feels like we are getting into an impasse and I am afraid we might walk away without any better understanding. Have you got any ideas that will help us clarify our thinking?

Concerning the communication as a basic dimension in intercultural education, we could recommend an interdisciplinary cultural approach towards language teaching. Teachers, and in particular language teachers, should pursue a more intercultural perspective when designing the curricula, as language teaching and other subjects do not automatically

convey culture implicit. Teachers benefit from being bi-culturally/multi-culturally competent, i.e. the ability to perceive, to evaluate, to believe in and to act in “multiple ways”, to be flexible to differing behaviour. The first and main recommendation for adapting curriculum in relation to intercultural communication is the focussing on language teaching in relation to other subjects. An intercultural language curriculum should take into consideration content-based instruction – that is of a non-language matter through a foreign language, with both subject matter and language learning as a goal. Interesting and meaningful activities make the pupils focus on something different from language teaching, and this “incidental learning” is very effective (Bertocchi, Hofmannova, Kazianka, Pavesi 2001).

The most suitable subjects for content and language integrated learning should be the sciences (biology, chemistry and physics), where experiments play an important part. Visualization and reality make learning more accessible. A language should wherever possible be taught with reference to authentic materials, that is materials produced by and for people who use the language as their main means of communication. This is an opposition to previous traditions where the syllabus was constructed following a certain grammatical sequence and the material was specially written, usually by non-natives. Another consideration, with the accent on communication, is that language learning is no longer perceived as an individual activity but as something collective. Students have to talk to somebody and it cannot always be the teacher. They must work in pairs and groups. They must be stimulated to talk and they will want to talk if they are able to involve themselves and their feelings.

#### 4. Didactical Resources

When we read about didactical resources, an image use to come into our mind, namely, *the textbook*. The textbook is one of the resources most frequently used in schools around the world. It is really useful; Comenius proposed to use it as a very useful tool to help teachers to show a compendium of the knowledge the students should learn. The textbook appears at a time when the number of pupils is growing and schooling is expanding among the population. Teachers should be responsible for an increasing number of students. Peer tutoring and other similar strategies are applied at that point.

Today teachers and students are confronting very different challenges. We are in a world where people and information are in a permanent state of flux. Many different communication channels are available. In this context, the use of the textbook as basic resource and, sometimes, unique, is naive. We should be aware that the textbook fixes the cultural contents we are transmitting and creating. The problem is that the cultural contents offered by textbooks have been chosen and filtered by editors, whose interests and objectives may not fit ours. The commercial, economical and political interests are responsible for the bias we can identify in the textbooks we use. The information the textbook includes is as important as the information it does not include. The textbook reflects the beliefs and world vision of a specific socio-cultural group (Aguado, 2003).

We propose to use diverse sources of information (movies, internet, media, art products, novels, music, television, people, associations). Please, check the Directory of Re-

sources developed to complement this Guide and use some of the resources incorporated in it. When we suggest teachers should reflect and select resources (material and human; internal and external support), we are attempting to define a few clear criteria in order to select them, and as Gimeno proposes resources may meet three main functions: support the contents, provoke motivation and be useful for building class structure.

Some recommended materials are:



- Materials to be distributed for students (trainers) in training; and Readers for further consultation.
- A handout is a sign of respect for your audience: they need to know what is covered, how, and how long - therefore it should be handed out at the beginning, and complete the information given (also given some people are more visually than audio inclined). After all, the format and attention given to the handout is an indication of how seriously you take your audience.
- Reading materials are best sent in advance. Include a reference list, and a list of links to websites.

Training should utilize the largest number of types of media (gestures, posters, handouts, drawings, flip-charts, white-boards, slides, copies, data projection, and materials produced jointly and on-the-spot).

One of the most important things to do, is to check your own resources at your school. Good organization and distribution of responsibilities could be a great help for both teachers and learners because this could facilitate academic work and the learning of curricular contents could improve the relations which are established both in the class and out of it. This could surely give an educative answer to all pupils (offering the opportunity to those who have more difficulties). Additionally, everyone knows which are their functions, responsibilities and how, when, and for what purpose and why they should (or must) do it.

For the foregoing reasons, it is important to know which is its own organization (school, pupils and teachers timetable, external collaboration, didactic materials, spaces,...), what kind of resources we could get from administration, how we design the structure of our class (resources, working groups, distribution of responsibilities,...), or what resources or specific materials we should acquire or elaborate. These assumptions entail other processes, such as the selection and distribution of the material resources.

Several arguments we could use are:



<b>Selective process</b> (we should take into account the following):	<b>Distribution of the material resources</b> (we should organise them according to curricular areas and levels of growth)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Materials used must be profitable (rentable), operable (manipulative)</li> <li>- They should not be sophisticated and should have a high grade of conservation</li> <li>- The use of one resource should provoke motivation</li> <li>- We should use technologies</li> <li>- Use materials which allow different rhythm of learning</li> <li>- We must try to get (with these materials) the same educative goals in all levels (centre and class)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Materials for fantasy games</li> <li>- Operable materials</li> <li>- Materials of physical properties</li> <li>- Reading, writing and language materials</li> <li>- Materials for motor growth</li> <li>- Materials for building aesthetics conscience</li> </ul>

Human resources are a core element when we reflect about resources in education. It is necessary to use the experience and knowledge of persons from organizations and experts; but also that of parents, volunteers, neighbours, community members, etc. It is also really important to realize the important resource we are. As we further improve ourselves then we become better at teaching.

When we work with heterogeneous groups of students (different styles and rhythms of learning, students at different stages, coming from different countries, with different cultural backgrounds...) we must make the most of the human resources we have. For example, Spanish schools have:

<b>a) Internal human resources:</b>	<b>b) External human resources we can find:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Course tutor who is responsible for the group.</li> <li>- Support teachers who foster integration. They work within the classroom and outside, working in coordination with the course tutor and other specialist teachers.</li> <li>- Vocational counsellor and its department.</li> <li>- Groups of teachers.</li> <li>- Students may also help develop the process of integration.</li> <li>- Administrative and other staff which enhance the socializing process of students and help them develop their social and personal autonomy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families. They can help to reinforce the teaching-learning process.</li> <li>- External Boards for Pedagogic Advise. Their members are responsible for the psychopedagogical assessment of students with difficulties in learning who need a specific educative curriculum.</li> <li>- Teachers Centres (CEPs), which are responsible for the continuous training of teachers.</li> <li>- Social mediation</li> <li>- Community workers</li> <li>- Other institutions.</li> </ul>

Whatever it may be, we have to decide the best organization, distribution of responsibilities, and the most suitable resources taking into account the group of pupils whom we are going to work with.



## activities and suggestions

### Activity 1

The activities we undertake in the classroom are closely linked with our ideas about how the students learn and with the way we ourselves have been taught by our teachers. We tend to reproduce the strategies that other have applied. Never-the-less, those links usually are not explicitly apparent. We should be able to make them explicit, otherwise the risk is to act according to a kind of inertia that moves us to propose activities because we have read about them in a book, because a colleague used to do it etc.

Let us try to identify our own motives in order to enable us to select and implement a specific strategy with our students.

So, describe the activities you use to undertake in the classroom or the ones you would like to do. Now, think about the ideas proposed at the beginning of this module concerning the objectives of compulsory education and our assumptions about teaching and learning:

The compulsory education objectives are not indoctrination, or custodial care or selection based on standard criteria. Compulsory education objectives are:

- To develop competencies more than to fill up our minds with information.
- To address feelings and beliefs as well as cognitive or intellectual development.
- To guarantee the access to further educational resources.

The assumptions about teaching and learning from an intercultural approach are:

- To teach is not to transfer knowledge, but to create the possibility for the production or construction of knowledge
  - We assume two main principles of learning: experience and interaction. These two main principles suggest the creation of possible spaces, activities, situations where teachers and students cooperate and share experiences.
- 
- **Do you think the activities you have already described fit these assumptions?**
  - **What kind of changes would you introduce in your daily activity with your students?**

## Activity 2

We suggest that you reflect in small groups about the proposals included in the table. Think about the principles in column 1 and then write down an example real or imaginary. Now propose some activity more appropriate to the principles pointed out in the preceding activity. Each small group should share their examples with the rest of the group.

Traditional school teaching and learning assumptions and strategies	...and those we propose: intercultural strategies
• Passivity	
• To listen attentively (the learner must listen the teacher explanations)	
• Learning is a learner activity, so that, it is an individual and not transferable activity.	
• Learners learn what teachers teach.	
• To learn how to repeat and to say what the teacher has previously said.	
• Teaching is a fragmented activity, offered in pieces: the disciplines. Each teacher organizes his/her disciplines in an independent way without links to other teachers disciplines.	

### Activity 3

Rath (1973) proposes several principles regarding the grouping of students into teams. Think about them and deduce what the consequences are of these principles when organizing the teaching process.

1. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another if it permits the student to make decisions about how to do it and what are the consequences.
2. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another if it promotes the student activity in accomplishing it.
3. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another if it requires the students to research ideas, intellectual processes and events in a personal dimension.
4. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another if it requires the student to interact with the environment.
5. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another if it can be done by different level students and with different interests.
6. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another if it requires the student to examine in a new context an idea, concept or event he/she is already familiar with.
7. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another when it requires the student to review ideas or events usually accepted by society.
8. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another when it exposes the student and the teacher to a success, fail or critical situation.
9. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another when it causes the student to review his/her initial assumptions and knowledge.
10. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another when it causes the student to apply and manage significant rules or disciplines.
11. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another when it gives the student an opportunity to plan with others, to participate in its development and to compare the results.
12. Under the same conditions, one activity is better than another when it is relevant to the objectives and explicit interests of the students.

**Activity 4**

Schooling (and certain kinds of parenting) can produce a cluster of beliefs and feelings toward learning that, like a computer virus, can disrupt our educational “operating systems”. The “perfectionist virus” is one of the most devastating. In a typical classroom students learn that they are expected to find out what the teacher thinks are the perfect answers or ideal methods to achieve the final answer. They know that their job is to repeat it perfectly in a test. Students end up trying to do something right the first time instead of incrementally learning to see what they can do with it. The consequences of the virus are: some students realise that they are not learning anything they can use, so their motivation decreases. Or, they assume that if they cannot mimic the answer effectively, it is their fault. They become anxious, unsatisfied perfectionists.

Describe your own experience with the perfectionist virus.

**Have you ever had the virus? When have you been called on to demonstrate your knowledge in a way that made you feel anxious? What were the circumstances?**

**What would you expect to see?**

**If your students were exposed to the virus, how would they act? What would they say? What would they not say?**

**How can you help your students recover from the perfectionist virus?**

**What is the real purpose behind your lesson? In other words, the one that makes the quality of our lives more human? How can your students be guided to this discovery? How can they become better at something than “is right or else be in trouble”?**

(Senge, P. (2000): *Schools that learn*. London: Doubleday, p. 184-185).



## proposals for collaboration

### PROPOSAL 1

Check out the INTER Project web site ([www.uned.es/interproject](http://www.uned.es/interproject)). In the "Needs Assessment Report" you will find out the observation scale titled: "Intercultural Education at schools" (IES). Look for and select the items concerning strategies and resources in the classroom. Use them to evaluate the activities undertaken in a specific class or school and/or the resources you are using. You can apply it in your own class or in that of a colleague.

### PROPOSAL 2

Paul Gorski offers a very interesting repertoire of activities. We show you one of them as an example. ([www.mhhe.com/socscience/education/multi/activities/inclusion.html](http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/education/multi/activities/inclusion.html))

#### **Classroom Inclusion and Learning Needs**

This activity requires 25-45 minutes.

##### **Purpose:**

Participants share their own experiences as students, exploring different ways people are made to feel "included" in the learning process. The existence of different learning needs and the necessity for a wide range of teaching styles emerges.

##### **Preparation:**

Divide participants into pairs, preferably with someone they do not know well.

##### **Instructions:**

Ask participants to share two stories with their partner: (1) Recall a time from your own schooling when you felt especially included in the learning process in a particular class; and (2) Recall a situation when you felt especially excluded from the learning process in a particular class. Allow 8-10 minutes. Bring students back to the big group and ask pairs to share each other's stories. Request a volunteer to record brief notes about both categories of stories.

##### **What makes students feel included?**

##### **What makes them feel excluded?**

Facilitate a discussion about the notes, examining consistencies and differences in individuals' stories and learning needs. Questions to guide the conversation can include the

following:

**What similarities do you see among the situations in which people felt especially included in a learning process?**

**What consistencies do you notice in the situations in which people felt excluded?**

**What differences among the stories do you find interesting?**

**What can you do as a teacher to ensure that the needs of all students with similar varying learning needs are sufficiently met?**

**Facilitator Notes:**

It is always important when activities call for participants to share their own stories and make themselves vulnerable to remind the group about active listening. Consider starting the activity by sharing your own set of stories to ease the tension.

This activity provides a perfect opportunity to challenge teachers to re-examine their own teaching practices. Challenge them to think about their own teaching as they engage in this activity and hear each other's stories.

Note: This activity was adapted from [Awareness Activities](#), part of the [Multicultural Pavilion Internet Project](#). Special thanks is extended to Bob Covert and the Multicultural Education team at the University of Virginia.

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### PROPOSAL 3

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Read the descriptions included in this module that exemplify different types of activities. Can you include another one? Ask your friends and your students to enrich the examples given. Watch the INTER video and discuss the same questions with your colleagues.

### PROPOSAL 4

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Check the INTER Directory of Resources to find out examples of different types of activities. Introduce some of them into your classroom. Pay particular attention to the film and music resources.

### PROPOSAL 5

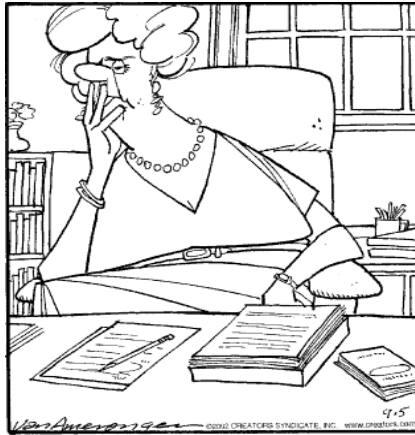
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Read the considerations about language teaching (communication strategies) and explain your own experience in learning a language other than your mother tongue.

- **What did you learn it for?**
- **Did you feel comfortable?**
- **How did you become competent?**
- **Do you use it? In which circumstances?**



## planning and adapting curriculum

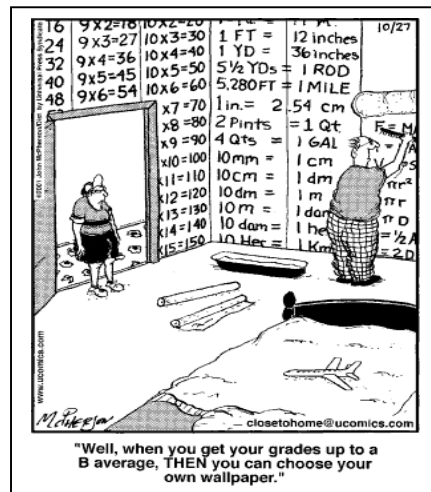


Marcie makes a little headway with her Ph.D. thesis, "The Specifics of Apathy."

2. Reflect on the following competencies that a teacher needs to develop in order to meet the needs of culturally diverse students. Discuss them with your colleagues. Write down some examples of those types of activities which you have undertaken by using the guide:

- Heterogeneity should be appreciated as a form of collective enrichment.
- The ability to cooperate, interact and collaborate
- Knowledge, analysis and interpretation of innermost feelings and emotions.
- Acceptance of others' feelings and emotions.
- Consider everybody to be equal.

1. When we adapt the curriculum, we must go through decisions which have been previously made: groupings, distribution of responsibilities and curriculum structure. Apply the auto-assessment yourself which we have included in the information section. Think of a real or imagined group of students. Write down the answer to each question or item. Discuss with the group the considerations you have written down.



"Well, when you get your grades up to a B average, THEN you can choose your own wallpaper."



- Consider the educative role as part of society.
- Consciousness of ones own prejudices and cultural bias.
- Acceptance of the social and human dimension of teaching.
- The application of knowledge to different situations.
- Development of communication skills
- Learning as a collective experience.

3. The quotation included at the beginning of the module describes two types of teachers. Do you know any teacher who fits that description? Describe how she or he acts both in the classroom and out of it.

4. Write down some objectives that the law establishes for the sixth grade in your country. Now think of any area of the curriculum you like. Discuss with your colleagues the best way to reach those objectives. What kind of activities would you implement in the classroom?

5. The INTER Directory offers you a series of movies, resources, music, books, to be applied in either primary or secondary education. Select some of them to plan and develop a learning activity with your students. You can organise groups and comment on the resources you have chosen. Look for new resources by, for example, visiting a Teachers Centre, or a Resource Centre in your city/town. Discuss with the rest of the group the reasons why you have chosen that selection and the necessary conditions in order to use the resources.



## specific resources and additional links

### Associations

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#### European Federation for Intercultural Learning

EFIL, the European federation for Intercultural Learning, is the umbrella organisation of the European AFS Organisations in Europe. AFS (formerly American Field Service) is a non-profit volunteer based educational organization offering exchanges for students, young adults and teachers in over 50 countries around the world. <http://efil.afs.org/>

**NAFSA: Association of International Educators** - An organization that promotes the exchange of scholars and students to and from the United States. They offer many programs and services for educators and administrators who work in international education programs. <http://www.nafsa.org/>

**SIETAR Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (Europa)** - European umbrella organization for SIETAR chapters in Europe as well as other members from around the world. The purpose of SIETAR is to encourage the development and application of knowledge, values and skills which enable effective intercultural and interethnic relations at individual, group, organisation and community levels. <http://www.sietar-europa.org/>

### Didactical resources

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Books and resources on global Cross-Cultural issues.

<http://www.interculturalpress.com>

Books and materials about intercultural subjects.

<http://www.pangea.org/edualter/>

Didactic resources files about Peace, Development and Interculturality.

<http://www.edualter.org/>

Guide of didactic resources about education in self-development.

<http://www.fuhem.es/CIP/EDUCA/recedu.htm>

Guide of documentary resources such as “We Are Equal, We Are Different”. Audiovisual material, videos, expositions, games...

<http://www.eurosur.org/RACIS/val-ind.htm>

Traditional tales from different countries plus class activities.

[www.xtec.es/recursos/cultura/contes.htm](http://www.xtec.es/recursos/cultura/contes.htm)

This website deals with published materials on intercultural experiences with immigrant students.

[www.fbofill.org/entrecultures](http://www.fbofill.org/entrecultures)

Resource Library: activities, materials, didactic units...

[www.cnice.mecd.es/interculturaneet](http://www.cnice.mecd.es/interculturaneet)

Document which designs plans to take in foreign students.

[www.gencat.es/ense/depart/acollida.htm](http://www.gencat.es/ense/depart/acollida.htm)

Resource activities which promote solidarity and tolerance.

<http://www.maestroteca.com>

Games how to solve conflicts.

[http://www.ctv.es/USERS/avicent/Juegos\\_paz/index.htm](http://www.ctv.es/USERS/avicent/Juegos_paz/index.htm)

Games from different cultures.

<http://www.pangea.org/aecgit/juegostodasculturas.htm>

Making up peace: games, activities, didactic units...

## Research groups

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**OFRIM. Red Cross.** It contains a resource guide for immigration and is funded by government and private institutions.

<http://www1.comadrid.es/ofrim/>

Website which fosters social dialogue among local, regional and European organizations working to fight social ostracism.

<http://www.epitelio.org>

Moral education for children and teenagers. Values to live. An international curriculum.

<http://www.livingvalues.net/espanol/principal.htm>

School cyberbus. “A Global Project for Teaching and Learning”, UN’s web.

<http://www0.un.org/cyberschoolbus/spanish/index.html>

## Bookshops

In this site we can find literature arranged so that information can be retrieved using words like entries (inter-culturality, racism,...).

<http://www.canalsolidario.org>

Monographs, books, articles, reports, literature... about moral education.

<http://www.eurosur.org/RACIS/val-ind.htm>

Electronic book: "Basis to promote education in moral values such as peace and social relationships".

Kindergarten: [http://pnte.cfnavarra.es/publicaciones/listauna.php?conv\\_inf](http://pnte.cfnavarra.es/publicaciones/listauna.php?conv_inf)

Primary: [http://pnte.cfnavarra.es/publicaciones/listauna.php?conv\\_pri](http://pnte.cfnavarra.es/publicaciones/listauna.php?conv_pri)

Secondary: [http://pnte.cfnavarra.es/publicaciones/listauna.php?conv\\_sec](http://pnte.cfnavarra.es/publicaciones/listauna.php?conv_sec)



## reflective questions and evaluation

MAGIC PRESCRIPTIONS" do NOT exist!

There are no set recipes which can be used with any students or any circumstances.

Good methods and academic contents will not have a positive effect if the student does not feel well or safe at school.

You can get success and also failure with the same strategy...so what should be the criteria to select and apply a specific strategy?

One strategy by itself does not solve the needs of different pupils. We have to use it in a flexible way and complement them. What are the requirements to accomplish that objective?

So we must think that we are compromised with our learners and with our work - and that means...what?

# glossary

## Cultural diversity

When we speak about cultural diversity we are taking into account all different strategies, norms and values human beings have been able to develop in order to live in groups, and as groups adapt into different environments, through time and space. These strategies, norms and values are made into customs and in this way are shared by a group of people whose members orient their behavior according to them, and are also taught to their offsprings. This process is always changing,, and so diversity is never static but dynamic. It is also necessary to be aware that there are also differences within the groups according to individual social positions and rols, and that these diferences have also to be taken into account when we speak about diversity.

We can say that all human beings share some of these customs but, at the same time, have also learn different ones, according to the social time and place where each one has been born and raised.

As human beings we have the duty to pay respect to other people's norms and values, to critically learn from them, and to discover ways to peacefully live with persons whose behaviors are oriented by customs different from our own.

See also Culture

## Cultural relativism

*Cultural relativism* is an anthropological paradigm which states that every piece of human behavior must be understood in its own context having in mind the beliefs and values which have originated and oriented it, and also being aware of the time and place where and when the conduct was observed. In everyday life this perspective could be used as a tool which help us understand other people motives for their behavior before judging it right or wrong according to our own beliefs and values. Cultural relativism is not moral relativism: everybody should act according to his/her own system of belifs and values. Nevertheless if we are to uderstand other peoples' behaviour, their motives for their conduct, it is useful to do not use our moral to judge them but to try to find out the values and belives which can explain that behavior. This is not the same as relative our own set of values and beliefs, but to try to understand other peoples motives for their behavior. It could be a useful tool in Education which will help us develop empathy, and critically think on on own beliefs and values being aware of other people's as well.

### References:

- Geertz, C. "Distinguish lecture: Anti-antirelativism". *American Anthropologist*, new series 86:2:263-278. 1984.
- Greenwood, D.J., and W.A. Stini. *Nature, culture, and human history: a bio-cultural introduction to anthropology*. New York: Harper & Row. 1977.

## Culture

What dictionaries tell us about *culture* (i.e. intellectual and artistic achievement or expression) is just a tiny part of what anthropologists think *culture* is, which includes not only what a small and “refined” group of people do, but what everybody think or do as a social being. Starting with Edward Burnett Tylor’s definition from 19th-century in the first paragraph of his *Primitive Culture* (1871): “*Culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and anyother capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society*”, anthropologists have been re-defining and re-formulating *culture* untill the point there are at least as many definitions of culture as anthropologists are (for example mine: culture is the whole set of beliefs, values and norms which which let any mamber of a society understand and partly predic other’s people behavior). Nevertheless since 1990s more serious arguments have arisen, even opposing the very use of the term *culture*. Anthropologists are today splited in two groups, one against the use of the term to avoiding making clusters out of people and by doing this making three mistakes: 1) to assume that people of the same culture must have the same ideas and beliefs, as if there wern’t relevant differences among them, 2) to assume also that they must be relevantly different from other groups, and in this way overlooking similarities, and 3) to think that cultural differences have a meaning in their own, and for that reason freezing they in time, as if differences had always the same meaning in spite of the context we are identifying them in and the people we are comparing them with. In spite of all tese argumentes a group of anthropologists prefer to keep the term watching out for some caution which includes the following: 1) using it always in plural and avoiding its singular form, 2) aknowleging that cultures do not have clear borders, 3) that there is as much diversity within a culture as in relation to other cultures, and 4) being aware that cultures are never static, they are always changing.

### References:

Fox, R. “Editorial: Culture-A second Chance?” *Current Anthropology* 40.1999  
 Tylor, E.B. *Primitive Culture*. Gloucester, Mass: P. Smith. 1970 [1958].

See also Cultural Diversity

## Discrimination

The guide applies the definitions of direct and indirect (structural) *discrimination* laid down in the equal treatment directive (2000/43/EC)<sup>7</sup>. *Direct discrimination* is taken to occur where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on grounds of racial or ethnic origin. There is *indirect discrimination* where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put persons of a particular racial or ethnic origin at a disadvantage compared with other per-

<sup>7</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. Official Journal of the European Communities, L 180/22-26 (19.7.2000), available at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/news/2002/jan/2000-43\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2002/jan/2000-43_en.pdf), (3.1.2004).

sons, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

*Institutional discrimination* exists when regulations or institutional / administrative practices (like in education systems) are leading to unfair treatment (positive or negative discrimination) of a particular ethnic group in relation to another group.

In this URL you can find comments on sex, race, equality, discrimination. These comments could be useful for us to elaborate working definitions:

Thompsons Labour and European Law Review.

<http://www.thompsons.law.co.uk/text/I0860004.htm>

Definition offered by the NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (Office of Equal Employment Opportunity):

Discrimination is defined in civil rights law as unfavourable or unfair treatment of a person or class of persons in comparison to others who are not members of the protected class because of race, sex, colour, religion, national origin, age, physical/mental handicap, sexual harassment, sexual orientation or reprisal for opposition to discriminatory practices or participation.

Discrimination may be described as a distinction whether intentional or not but based on grounds relating to personal characteristics of an individual or group, which has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on such individual or group not imposed upon others, or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to other members of society.

Distinctions based on personal characteristics attributed to an individual solely on the basis of association with a group will rarely escape the charge of discrimination, while those based on an individual's merits and capacities will rarely be so classed.

UK definition from Stephen Lawrence report:

"The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantages minority ethnic people"

<http://www.tolerance.cz/courses/UK/Stephen%20Lawrence.doc>

See also the ICERD definition of racial discrimination mainly the latter part that says that positive measures shall not be regarded as discrimination Article 1.4 "Special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms shall not be deemed racial discrimination, provided, however, that such measures do not, as a consequence, lead to the maintenance of separate rights for different racial groups and that they shall not be continued after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved." [http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_icerd.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_icerd.htm).

## Education for citizenship

### Council of Europe: Education for Democratic Citizenship

The Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) includes all practices and activities designed to help young people and adults participate actively in democratic life by accepting and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society. EDC encompasses various means of learning Democratic Citizenship. It includes in particular, Human Rights Education, Civic Education, Peace Education, Global Education and Intercultural Education. As one cannot “learn” democratic citizenship without practicing it, EDC also includes various activities in which participation in society can be learned, exercised and encouraged. The aim of the EDC is to strengthen democratic societies by fostering and perpetuating a vibrant democratic culture. It seeks to instil a sense of belonging, a commitment to democratic society and an awareness of shared fundamental values in order to build a free, tolerant and just society at national and European levels.

[http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural\\_Co-operation/education/E.D.C/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/E.D.C/)

Crick Report 2002 (UK): Education for citizenship should embrace:

1. Social and moral responsibility:

learning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour, both in and beyond the classroom, towards those in authority and towards each other.

2. Community involvement:

learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of your neighbourhood.

3. Political literacy:

learning about the institutions, problems and practices of our democracy and how to become effective in the life of the nation, locally, regionally and nationally.

Conclusion: Citizenship has both legal aspects and a wider meaning connected with communities and participation. The political landscape is changing fairly rapidly at the moment, and notions of citizenship are bound to change in response to this.

Like democracy, citizenship is a two-way process, and 'what are you doing with citizenship in order to make it work for you?' could be a useful starting point.

## Equity and equality

Equity deals with justice, the justice that must be present at every educational acting in order to meet the needs of every citizen. Equity refers to diversity, the different opportunities the students have when making decisions about education. Equity is a general principle that should guide every educational decision to guarantee justice when distributing education as a social good.

Equality of opportunities deals with providing everyone with a similar opportunity, regardless of weight, size, family, gender, age, social background, or anything else. So that,



equity is what we, as educators, seek. By looking to equality and understanding the reasons behind inequalities, we can move toward equity in the schools.

Barrow, R. and Milburn, G.(ed.) (1990). A Critical Dictionary of Educational Concepts. Sussex: Harvester.

## Hidden curriculum

Hidden curriculum involves all factors that influence learning, including the unintentional and unconscious ones, be it attitudes or prejudices of teachers, nonverbal communication, remarks by a teacher at break times, seemingly non-related content of other subjects, learning acquired from other resources than just "official" ones, generally everything that may influence the final result of learning. If teachers are aware of the hidden aspects of curriculum, they may use them either in a synergic way (in positive cases) or teach pupils how to cope with controversial issues and minimise impact of negative factors in a given society, school, class.

The phrase "hidden curriculum" was originally coined by Brian Jackson ("Life In Classrooms", 1968) to draw attention to the idea that schools do more than simply aid the transmission of knowledge between one generation and the next. Jackson argues that we need to understand "education" as a socialisation process. That is, a process that involves the transmission of norms and values as well as a body of socially-approved knowledge (that also involves socially-derived conceptions of what constitutes valid knowledge, acceptable levels of understanding and so forth). We have to understand not just the social construction of knowledge (the way cultures define and produce what they consider to be valid forms of knowledge), but also the way the teaching and learning process is socially-constructed. Jackson's main argument is that pupils, if they are to succeed within the education system, have to "learn how to learn". That is, they have to learn to conform not just to the formal rules of the school but also to the informal rules, beliefs and attitudes perpetuated through the socialisation process.

The basic idea behind the concept of the hidden curriculum, therefore, is that pupils learn things that are not actually taught in the formal curriculum and, in this respect, the concept of a hidden curriculum refers to the way the learning process is organised: 1. Consciously, such as: a) In terms of the physical organisation of the school itself - a place separate from the home, the workplace and the like; b) The organisation of the classroom - for example, the teacher standing at the front, pupils seated and arranged in rows; 2. Unconsciously, such as: a) The way individual teachers interpret the behaviour of pupils; b) The way teachers have different expectations of pupils based on interpretations of behaviour in class.

Key references:

Jackson, Brian Life In Classrooms, 1968  
<http://www.sociology.org.uk/tece1tl1.htm>

## Inclusive education

The definition of inclusion often used is as follows; belonging to the group, sharing in the benefits that being part of the group provides and have joint responsibility for tasks and obligations (Ekeberg & Holmberg, 2002, 2004).

An inclusive school makes room for all students to participate in and belong to a class with a wide diversity. This imposes a responsibility on a school and its teachers to organise the tuition of diverse groups of individuals with varying degrees of need for individual adaptation within the framework of a class. The group can vary as far as the aptitudes of the youths are concerned in different areas, such as, for example:

- a range of development profiles from those with particularly good abilities to those with learning difficulties
- with a need for tuition in different areas of development
- with different ways of learning and styles of working

Education is an institution that binds us together. We all share it. It has its roots in the past and is meant to equip us for the future. It transfers knowledge, culture and values from one generation to the next. It promotes social mobility and ensures the creation of values and welfare for all. For the individual, education is to contribute to cultural and moral growth, mastering social skills and learning self-sufficiency. It passes on values and imparts knowledge and tools that allow every one to make full use of their abilities and realise their talents. It is meant to cultivate and educate so that individuals can accept personal responsibility for themselves and their fellows. Education must make it possible for pupils to develop so that they can make well-founded decisions and influence their own future.

### *Inclusive education and belonging to a class*

Most often, inclusion first and foremost has to do with the fact that academic and social learning takes place within the context of a class. Inclusion is centred on the learning environment and participating. In the case of students with special educational needs, individual adaptations should be made during periods of mainstream education. The inclusion work involves making distinct choices in a number of areas. Inclusion is based on a school's teaching being adapted as far as possible to an individual's needs and the fact that the tuition should take place in the context of a compulsory school. In other words, students with special needs form part of the students as a whole and the diversity of students that a class comprises of. If a student's aptitude for learning and level of maturity do not conform to the curriculum being taught, this can hamper the work of inclusion. The challenge for schools is to create an inclusive school and avoid learning developing for all. This requires a great degree of tolerance as far as accepting differences are concerned. The tolerance of differences, flexibility and variation will have an effect on the degree to which a school and its teachers succeed in achieving the goal of inclusive education and a school for all.

## Learning community

A *learning community* is a project of social and cultural transformation of an educational centre and its environment in order to arrive to an Information society for all the people, based upon the dialogical learning, by means of a participative education of the community, which shapes in all its spaces, including the classroom.

Definition in Spanish: “*Una comunidad de aprendizaje es un proyecto de transformación social y cultural de un centro educativo y de su entorno para conseguir una Sociedad de la Información para todos y todas las personas, basada en el aprendizaje dialógico, mediante una educación participativa de la comunidad, que se concreta en todos sus espacios, incluida el aula*” <http://www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net>

“A *school learning community* includes educators, students, parents, and community partners who work together to improve the school and enhance students' learning opportunities” Joyce L. Epstein and Karen Clark Salinas, Educational Leadership [http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed\\_lead/200405/epstein.html](http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed_lead/200405/epstein.html)

### References:

- Creating learning communities: models, resources and new ways of thinking about teaching and learning. <http://www.creatinglearningcommunities.org>

A navigable and downloadable book about learning communities.

- Comunidades de aprendizaje <http://www.comunidadesdeaprendizaje.net>

Spanish website showing how to transform schools into learning communities.

- *Educational Leadership*, May 2004, Volume 61, Number 8: Schools as Learning Communities. [http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed\\_lead/index.html](http://www.ascd.org/publications/ed_lead/index.html)

## Minority

A minority exist only related to a majority. Minority can therefore simplest be explained as a group of people that are not belonging to the majority in the society. Those who make up a minority in one setting can be a majority in another setting. A minority can be cultural, political, disabled and sex minorities. Chancing a state boarder can lead to the reality that an earlier cultural minority can be a part of the majority. A modern state formation without cultural minorities will not possible. Minority has also a political perspective. Most of European minorities often are described as underprivileged with the character as an underclass. In a democratic society the majority has the power and if they use the power to their own advantage, the minority easy will became a political and social secondary society possession. This can be compensated with giving the minority special rights.

An important minority political question concern the relation between individually and collective rights. The right state and the liberal democracy is primary responsible to secure the individuals fundamental rights without regard to belonging to the group. The critical of collective rights are afraid of the suppression of individuals that those rights can lead to, and arguments for the individual's right to choose who to marry, medical treatment, as well as religion and which group you will belong. The speakers for collective rights focus on the minority groups rights to protect their own existence and restrict influence from the majority. For the weakness in a minority population can that form for protecting be a question of surviving. The challenge is to take care of the needs for the external protection without taking away the minorities their freedom and right to individual self-decision and self-determination.

## Multicultural Society

*Multicultural society* mainly is defined as a society where exist different cultural groups, which are based on the common values, for example, language, civic duties etc. Multicultural society can be defined in close relation with the concept of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism has come to refer to: a) the state of a society or the world in which there exists numerous distinct ethnic and cultural groups seen to be political relevant; b) a program or policy advocating or promoting such a society.

All societies can be defined as multicultural even within one ethnos - the adjective *multicultural* is broader than multiethnic and multiracial and it covers various cultures and subcultures in society, including cultures of discriminated minorities such as disabled people, gay and lesbian groups, older people and also woman therefore ethnic and linguistic make up are only one side of cultures and subcultures that are inherently diverse in any society thus cultural homogeneity is and has been a myth.

As it is pointed out in *Smelser, Baltes, 2001*, human societies have always been culturally diverse, and certainly most organized political societies. Yet for much of the history of Western political philosophy, the ideals of political life which have been promulgated have presumed that citizens shared not only a common political status, but a common descent, language and culture.

The most actual open issues in the political philosophy concerning multicultural society are: Does social justice require a common culture in order to motivate the goodwill and sacrifices it typically demands of citizens? Can a political society be stable if too much emphases is placed on the diversity of its peoples and cultures? Can democratic institutions work and be seen to be legitimate, if the citizens of the state speak different languages, have different world views, and even they perceive the history of their nation differently?

Sources:

*Smelser N.J., Baltes P.B. (ed).* (2001). *International Encyclopedia of the Social&Behavioral Sciences*. Amsterdam, Paris, N.Y: Elsevier.

## Nationalism

Nationalism often is associated with Nazism and fascism. Marxist has seen the classes as the most important revolutionary power, and had the tendency to under evaluate the political importance of the nationalism.

*A nation can be explained both as a state and as a people.* Nationalism has to perspectives; an ethnical and political. From a political point of view nationalism means that all people in a defined territory shall have the same rights, possibilities and duties. We talk about a constitutional understanding of a nation. From an ethnical perspective it means that a nation shall have a common language, the same place of birth and a common history. We talk about a cultural understanding of the nation. The reality is that both the ethnical and political perspective often is merged together.

Nationalism can be defined as a political ideology about the fact that borders to the state should be the same as the cultural borders: *One country – one people!*

Nationalism can seem inclusive and exclusive. Nationalism create participating there no participating would have exist before. In the earlier nationalistic time few where thinking that they where Spanish men, Frenchmen or Norwegian, They belonged primary to the family, they local community and the stand.

## Prejudice

A prejudice, as the word itself is meaning, is an idea which has been assumed before judgment has been elaborated. Prejudices are ideas going from one person to another one, the second person is welcoming the idea just because of trust in the first person, and not because of his/her own experience. We are used to think of a "prejudice" as something negative, something bad, but we need prejudices in order to build our social relationships, without them we cannot communicate. Thanks to prejudices we can store in our minds and use ideas we get from other people and make them our own. In this way we can multiply information about our environment we need to behave using other people's experiences and ideas as if they were ours, and we do not have to experiment ourselves with all the information we manage to gather in this way. So prejudices are saving our time and let us accumulate other people's ideas and experiences. In this way they are valuable, but because they are so easy to get, they are also in danger of being missused: when we do not let them change if our own experience sometimes contradicts them, they became stuck and we start using them and passing them into other persons as frozen ideas which nobody dares to change or even argue against.

The classic definition of prejudice is the one put forth by the famous Harvard psychologist, Gordon Allport, who published *The Nature of Prejudice* in 1954: "Prejudice is an

antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be felt or expressed. It may be directed toward a group or an individual of that group". The keyword in this definition is "antipathy". It is a strange word which Webster's Dictionary easily defines as a "negative feeling", but psychologists are hard-pressed to define it, and usually describe it NOT as an emotion or feeling, but as something in-between a personality trait and a personal habit. Of historical note, long ago there was a debate in psychology between Theodore Adorno and associates (creators of the concept of authoritarian personality) and Gordon Allport/Thomas Pettigrew (of Harvard) over whether prejudice was a personality trait or not. Although authoritarian personality theory was quite popular (and still is), it didn't explain Southern patterns of racism (people who were good egalitarian people but simply accepted segregation as the way things were) very well. Basically, the Harvard definition won out, and it is generally accepted today that THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A PREJUDICED PERSONALITY TYPE. It would be a conceptual mistake to blame racism on racist personalities or, to a lesser extent, use phrases like "prejudiced persons" or "racists" to connote the existence of certain personality types. It's NOT part of the personality. It's NOT even part of the socialization process (Prejudice is *caught* not *taught*). Prejudice is a faulty and inflexible generalization precisely because it's purely arbitrary, not subject to change, and usually develops PRIOR to any actual real contact with the object of the prejudice. It's the same as passing judgment on someone BEFORE you've ever met them (aka: a "prejudgment" if you will). It's also NOT an emotion, but more of an intellectual position taken irregardless of how much objective information is available to a person. What makes it close to being a habit is that the person thinks their intellectual position is well-thought out, and it serves as a core in all their intellectual thinking. A social science research word with some of the same meaning is *bias*. And finally, NO TWO CASES OF PREJUDICE ARE EXACTLY THE SAME because of the way each person internalizes it into the core of their thinking.

References:

<http://faculty.ncwc.edu/toconnor/soc/355lect01.htm>

ALLPORT, G. W. 1958. *The Nature of Prejudice*. New York: Garden City.

## Participating

The inclusive society intends to give all individuals the same possibility to participate. That means that each individual shall share the benefits that being part of the society provides and have joint responsibility for tasks and obligations. There will be certain expectation to each person if they shall succeed in participation. Those are based on a person respect and tolerance to other people behaviour that are different from your self. Each person has the right to be an equal human as your self. If a person shall have the possibility to participate it is necessary to communicate and collaborate.

### Participating and education

The school has a central role in their teaching and there are expectations to the teachers to be a good model in their participating with the youth. To create a climate of shared responsibility, students are encouraged to initiate the process themselves. In educational pro-

grams collaboration has a central role and often it's based on problem-solving learning. In a collaborative problem-solving programme, students are asked to solve problems together whenever a physical, social or instructional exclusion of a student occurs. During a collaborative problem-solving session, the teacher leads the students through the steps of a structured process; identifying the issue, discussing all possible solutions, screen solutions, choosing and evaluating the solution. Collaborative problem-solving is judged to be an effective program to promote inclusion, and easy to implement according to the teaching staff (Salisbury, Evans and Palombaro, 1997).

Collaborative learning also appears to be an effective strategy for students who are at risk of academic failure (Self, Benning, Marston and Magnusson, 1991).

Participating in most peer tutoring settings, students are assigned to heterogeneous ability pairs. During tutoring sessions, students read aloud and work on comprehensive activities after receiving reading instruction. Tutor–learner roles are reciprocal, and students give each other feedback. In most cases, students are assigned to teams. Peer tutoring programmes seem to be easy to implement and any reading material can be used. Peer tutoring has been proven to be an effective strategy in increasing the academic achievement of students with and without disabilities (Kamps, Barbeta, Leonard and Delquadri, 1994; Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes and Simmons, 1997; Stevens and Slavin, 1995a, 1995b) and in increasing social interactions (Kamps, Barbeta, Leonard and Delquadri, 1994).

## Racism

Racism can be defined as an attitude (ideology) or action (behaviour) that disadvantages individuals or groups on the basis of their “racial” inferiority<sup>8</sup>, mainly by means of limiting their access to scarce resources.

It is however impossible to agree on one practical operational definition as the term has many meanings in different settings and for different purposes; manifestations of racism vary from violent attacks or scape-goating to paternalistic crypto-racist assistance to ethnic minority groups. Moreover there is a strong tendency to deny<sup>9</sup> racism in modern societies because it is, generally, an unacceptable phenomenon.

The two main meanings of the term racism are

- 1) Ideology or a set of beliefs about racial superiority. Racism as ideology can be further divided into

<sup>8</sup> Racial difference or racial inferiority is often perceived or constructed in terms of different culture, ethnicity, religion, language, etc.

Race is a social construct, i.e. a category without any biological underpinning, therefore it should no longer be defined as a biological category, see researches in genetics in the 80's, e.g. Rose, Steven, Lewontin, Richard, Kamin, Leon (1990) *Not In Our Genes. Biology, ideology and human nature*, London: Penguin Books

Also the preamble of the EU Race Directive states that “The European Union rejects theories which attempt to determine the existence of separate human races. The use of the term “racial origin” in this Directive does not imply an acceptance of such theories”.

<sup>9</sup> Issues of denial are dealt with in Cohen Stanley (1995) *Denial and Acknowledgement: The Impact of Information about Human Rights Violation*, The Hebrew University, chapter 2, pp. 19-58; quoted from Petrova, Dimitrina: The Denial of Racism, in *Roma Rights*, Newsletter of the ERRC, Number 4, 2000, Racism: Denial and Acknowledgment, pp.29 a 35

- a) the so called “scientific racism of the 19th century”, manifested for example in the publication by Herrnstein, Murray, 1995<sup>10</sup>;
  - b) “popular” racism or “common sense” racism that is based on ethnocentrism, a tendency to believe that one’s own cultural paradigm is universal, neutral and superior to any other cultures<sup>11</sup>;
- 2) “the whole complex of factors which produce racial discrimination” and sometimes also “those which produce racial disadvantage”<sup>12</sup>

Racism is often regarded as a general term inclusive of xenophobia, islamophobia, and anti-Semitism, however for educational purposes it is useful to distinguish among these terms. It is important to note that both racism as ideology and racism as action or behaviour (racial discrimination) work on different levels: individual, cultural, institutional, and structural, which is imperative mainly for tackling racism by means of public policy and social work<sup>13</sup>. One of the most complex forms of racism is institutional racism<sup>14</sup>, sometimes also referred to as structural racism<sup>15</sup>.

There are many definitions of racism and related terms (racial discrimination, racialisation, racialism<sup>16</sup>, etc.) by academics and professionals, some are quite narrow<sup>17</sup>. Definition of racial discrimination in the UN CERD is very broad and general, which may not be practical for designing implementation policies. On the other hand it is inclusive of all disadvantaging practices and also, in its second part it states that positive action should not be regarded as inverse discrimination which is a useful argument for public policy making. Racial discrimination is also defined by the EU “Race Equality” Directive 43/2000<sup>18</sup> that provides definitions of direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation;

10 see critique of Murray, Herrnstein: *The Bell Curve*, 1995 by Stephen Gould: *The Mismeasure of Man*, 1996

11 It can be also said that there are two forms of racism: the first one denies all difference in the name of universality of the human nature, but unconsciously it takes back this universality to the dominant model; the second one uses the obvious differences to turn them into instruments of domination, exploitation, condemnation, exclusion, or extermination.

12 Cashmore, Ellis (1996) *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, London: Routledge, p. 308

13 Thompson, Neil (1993) *Anti-discrimination Practice*, MacMillan

14 One simple definition covers Institutional racism as rules and procedures that reproduce racial inequality. For another definition with comments see Cashmore (1996) pp. 169-172. For a recent “practical” definition of IR see for example the Steven Lawrence report, UK, para. 6.34: “The concept of institutional racism which we apply consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. It persists because of the failure of the organisation openly and adequately to recognise and address its existence and causes by policy, example and leadership. Without recognition and action to eliminate such racism it can prevail as part of the ethos or culture of the organisation. It is a corrosive disease”. *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny*, CM4262-I, London: The Stationary Office; also at [www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm](http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm42/4262/4262.htm); mainly chapter 6, pp. 26-28

15 E.g. Hana Frštejnska, in Sisková, Tatjana (ed.) *Výchova k toleranci a proti rasismu (Education for Tolerance and against Racism)*, Praha: Portal, 1998, pp13- 27; Tove Skutnab Kangas and others

16 According to John Rex: “racism refers to theory, racialism to practice”; more often racism refers to both attitudes and behaviour

17 E.g. The New Encyclopaedia of Britannica defines “racism, also called racialism” as “the theory or idea that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and certain traits of personality, intellect, or culture and, combined with it, the notion that some races are inherently superior to others” 9:880:3a

18 EU Directive 2000/43/EC Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment Between Persons Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin, (adopted on 29 June 2000).



a very useful is the definition of indirect discrimination as a result of “apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice ...”<sup>19</sup>

#### Key references:

Cashmore, Ellis (1996) *Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations*, London: Routledge  
Thompson, Neil (1993) *Anti-discriminatory Practice*, MacMillan

## Social Justice

Justice in social theory is about principles regulating social and economic inequalities, or, in other words how to ensure fairness in society. However, different political ideologies yield different principles of justice, therefore socialist, liberal, libertarian, New Right and old-style conservative proponents of social justice will rarely find a common ground for reaching an agreement about what should constitute these principles.

Justice is discussed in terms of equality (both equality of opportunity as well as equality of outcome), distributive and procedural justice, equity (equality relative to individual contribution), retributive justice, justice as entitlement, merit, desert as well as other issues.

The most famous principle of justice is John Rawls’ “difference principle”, which asserts that inequalities in the distribution of scarce goods (power, money, access to health-care...) are justified only if they serve to increase the advantage of the least favoured groups in society<sup>20</sup>.

In educational settings social justice implies inclusion of disadvantaged or different pupils, mainly ensuring conditions for full development of the potential of all children irrespective of their socio cultural backgrounds. School thus should meet all pupils needs and not demand that they adjust / assimilate to often Eurocentric middle class values that most mainstream schools profess.

According to Paul Gorski (2000) ideals of social justice are the base of multicultural education, together with equity, and a dedication to facilitating educational experiences in which all students reach their full potential as learners and as socially aware and active beings, locally, nationally, and globally. Multicultural education acknowledges that schools are essential to laying the foundation for the transformation of society and the elimination of oppression and injustice.

#### References:

Rawls, John, *A Theory of Justice*, 1972

Gorski, Paul, definitions of multicultural education at: Multicultural Pavilion. Resources and dialogues for equity in education. Working definitions at  
<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/index.html>

Gorski, Paul, Multicultural Supersite.

<http://www.mhhe.com/socscience/education/multi/index.mhtml>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. Article 2, para 2b

<sup>20</sup> A Theory of Justice, 1972

## Stereotype

Stereotypes – as prejudices – are useful ideas in human communication, that is why we take the work to make them. To stereotype is to simplify by associating ideas learned from other people (as prejudices) to a label or category. When we stereotype we get a set of ideas which tell us about the category or label we are about to use, and with these ideas we can make a rough picture of the label (or the people categorized under that label), enough to just start communicating. Stereotypes have two disadvantages besides their advantages. First, they are very simple and for that reason they oversimplify what we know about the category or the label. Second, they are –as prejudices- very easy to obtain and very hard to challenge, once acquired we do not take the time and the work to change them. If we have acquired a certain stereotype on a human group, we keep on associating the same simple ideas to the label of the group, and to all the people gathered under that label. If we experience directly with one of the members and what we are experiencing opposes the stereotype we do not modify the stereotype (as we should do), we do not even elaborate on it, we just make an exception with this particular person and we tend to keep the stereotype unmodified and simple in spite of all the new information gathered by ourselves.

## Toleration

Toleration is used to mean freedom or liberty to express beliefs, actions or practices. At the same time it is also understood as a narrower concept. It is concerned specifically with permitting the expression of the beliefs, actions or practices which the tolerator would prefer not to exist. To describe a person or group as acting tolerantly by standard implies that they have the power to prohibit or interfere with that which they are tolerating, but choose not to do so.

Many arguments for a policy of toleration with respect to particular beliefs or actions are largely prudential or pragmatic. They are couched in terms of the social, economical or political costs of intolerance. Another argument for toleration has derived from moral or religious scepticism.

In Modern Western societies, discussion about the scope and limits of toleration have centred around race, religion, gender, sexual practices and professional affiliation.

(Based on Horton, J. (ed.) (1993): *Liberalism, Multiculturalism and Toleration*. London: Macmillan).